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Hunters in Transition

An Outline of Early Sámi History

By

Lars Ivar Hansen and Bjørnar Olsen



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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The scholarly literature on the Sámi is very extensive. Until the 1970s, most of the contributions were from linguists and scholars who approached the Sámi from what may broadly be described as an ethnographic perspective. After Gustaf von Düben published the first real ethnographic monograph on the Sámi in 1873, *Om Lappland och Lapparna* (On Lapland and the Lapps), dozens of ethnographic books on Sámi culture have been published in a number of languages. Before the emergence of the specialized academic fields we know today, a whole series of descriptions of the Sámi, more or less ethnographic in character, were published, such as Schefferus's *Laponia* (1673) and Leem's *Finnmarkens Lapper* (The Lapps of Finnmark, 1767).

From the second half of the nineteenth century, research on the Sámi became associated with a scientific field of its own, known as Lappology.¹ As was the case with studies of several other 'foreign' cultures, such as the Inuit (Eskimology) and the Chinese (Sinology), research into the Sámi and their way of life was compartmentalized and placed outside the standard disciplinary structure. At the same time, Lappology had distinct disciplinary roots, primarily in ethnography and philology. Despite this very selective disciplinary background, Lappology was considered as providing a very adequate and holistic account of Sámi society and cultural history. Whereas research into other European societies and cultures required the contributions of a number of specialist fields, not least history, knowledge of the Sámi was thought to be sufficiently obtained through this restrictive disciplinary framework. Although in retrospect, Lappology clearly represents an outdated scientific and cultural outlook, it must nevertheless be acknowledged that it provided an arena for the study of Sámi culture in an academic world that was otherwise quite closed to this subject.

However, one consequence of this peculiar academic division of labor was that there was strikingly little historical and archaeological literature about the Sámi for a very long time. It was not until the end of the twentieth century that Sámi history became a research field in its own

¹ Hansen and Niemi 2001.

right. Until then, Sámi culture and cultural history was largely an ethnographic or 'lappological' issue.² Today, Sámi history is considered to be an accepted field of historical and archaeological research, but we need not go very far back into the twentieth century to find quite a different state of affairs. We shall therefore begin by looking at why writing the Sámi's ethnography long represented such an obvious alternative to writing their history.

1.1 A PEOPLE WITHOUT HISTORY?

Until the 1970s, it was widely accepted that the Sámi past did not belong to the academic responsibilities of the historical disciplines. Not only could the Sámi be "disregarded" as stated by the Norwegian historian, Ernst Sars, when the 'great' national histories of the Nordic kingdoms were being written, the Sámi were also conspicuously absent from regional and local studies of the settlement history of northern and central Scandinavia.³ For example, the standard archaeological work, *The Iron Age Settlement of Arctic Norway*,⁴ deals solely with finds relating to the Norse settlement of northern Norway. It seems that one reason for omitting the Sámi from such studies was that the concept of 'settlement' was implicitly understood to be synonymous with the sedentary farming settlement of the Norse population. Paradoxically, therefore, the Sámi past largely unfolded in areas that settlement maps labeled as 'uninhabited.'

When the Sámi actually do appear in historical narratives, it was usually because their activities or presence explained an aspect of Norse society. In a number of archaeological and historical works, a Sámi presence is implicitly crucial for considering a particular phenomenon, whereas their presence otherwise may be easily ignored in these very same discussions.⁵ For example, there are many references to *finneskatten* (the Finn tax) and the Lapps as a source of income for Norwegian chieftains and kings, without the Sámi themselves being considered of interest in the historical plots. This role as extras, or props, in the narratives of more 'central' historical subjects is a fate that the Sámi, of course, share with many other marginalized groups. Actually, their appearance in historical and

² Schanche and Olsen 1983; Olsen 1983; Olsen 1986, 2007; Zachrisson 1993; Ojala 2009.

³ Zachrisson 1993.

⁴ Sjøvold 1962, 1974.

⁵ Schanche and Olsen 1983, 132.

archaeological discourses seems pertinently similar to Edward Said's pithy characterization of the role of servants in eighteenth-century English novels: they were there, but unaccounted for other than being a useful part of the setting.⁶

In his monumental work, *De förhistoriske folken in Europa* (The Prehistoric Peoples of Europe) published in 1880, the prominent Swedish archaeologist Hans H. Hildebrand wrote that, "The difference between historical peoples and primitive peoples lies in the fact that the former have a history, while the latter at best may be mentioned in the history of another people."⁷ Hildebrand's statement reveals not only how a distinction was made between peoples *with* and people *without* history,⁸ but also how the historical representation of 'primitive peoples' could only happen indirectly, through the history of another people. The hold of Social Darwinism, racial discourse, and nationalism on scientific discourses in the latter half of the nineteenth century meant that history became the privilege of a few, primarily Western, peoples. Because of their current status, the argument went, these societies had documented their dynamism and their ability to develop. Other peoples were assumed to lack such qualities and hence had remained primitive.

This distinction between peoples with and without history proved to be decisive for the Sámi's destiny as an ethnographic rather than a historical subject in academic research. The position of different peoples and cultures in the academic disciplinary landscape was in many ways cemented by the closely related distinction between *Volkskunde* (folklore) and *Völkerkunde* (ethnology). *Volkskunde* developed as almost a kind of academic form of nationalism; its purpose was to shed light on the roots of the nation as manifested in language, folklore, and national history.⁹ Nationhood was largely synonymous with having a history, and the disciplines of archaeology and history were therefore assigned a prominent position in various national projects. Based on a nationalist doctrine of cultural and ethnic homogeneity, these national projects also set their own strict requirements as to which subjects historical discourse could include. In his analysis of Ernst Sars's work, *Udsigt over den norske Historien* (A View of the History of Norway, published in four volumes

⁶ Said 1989, 210.

⁷ Hildebrand 1880, 15 (authors' translation).

⁸ Wolf 1992.

⁹ Gerholm and Hannerz 1982; Worsley 1984.

between 1873 and 1891), Narve Fulsås claims the omission of the Sámi was due to the fact that:

The race, i.e., the Sámi, was the nation's diametrical opposite, which is why they had to be excluded for the nation to be identical with itself. The alternative, on Sars's premises, was to say that Norway could never become one nation because the country was comprised of two 'races'.¹⁰

Völkerkunde, or ethnography, became the academic alternative for indigenous peoples, minorities, and numerous non-Western peoples. Such peoples were considered primitive and immutable; they had come to a halt at various stages in human development and could thus be viewed almost as remnants of the past.¹¹ In his book, *Nordens siste nomade* (The Last Nomad of Scandinavia), Hans Kaarsberg reflects as follows:

I regard a true Lapp with an interest similar to that with which an antiquarian regards a well-preserved flint tool from the Stone Age: it may well be that the sharp edges of the stone wedge have been damaged in places over time . . . The stone wedge has still remained essentially unchanged. And you would hardly be wrong to see in the Lapp the genuine flint remnants of a highly peculiar aboriginal people.¹²

Curiously, despite their ascribed ancient status, the Sámi were not particularly interesting to the disciplines studying the past. In archaeology, they were sporadically used as analogies or illustrative examples for prehistoric phenomena where this was considered appropriate.¹³ As a whole, the Sámi remained in the domain of ethnography, a discipline devoted to the study of non-European, 'primitive' cultures. Thus, in Scandinavian academic writing, this gave rise to the tenacious distinction between a Norwegian/ Swedish history and a Sámi ethnography manifested in scientific texts and museum exhibits from the second half of the nineteenth century onwards. In museums still today, the 'proper' representations of the Sámi are predominantly ethnographic in scope. As such, these representations of Sámi culture unfold detached from the system of time that otherwise structure historical works and exhibitions.¹⁴

¹⁰ Fulsås 1999, 240–241.

¹¹ Fabian 1983; Malik 1996.

¹² Kaarsberg 1897, 59.

¹³ Hesjedal 2001.

¹⁴ Olsen 1986, 1991, 2000a.

1.2 MAKING THE SÁMI PAST VISIBLE

In the 1970s, ethnographic hegemony was challenged by the increasing involvement of historians and archaeologists, and a critical perspective emerged in these disciplines as well as in the social sciences in general.¹⁵ Even so, it was not until the 1980s that Sámi history and archaeology could be described as visible academic fields. This process of making the Sámi visible as historical subjects can be explained in terms of several concurrent factors. The radicalization and political mobilization that occurred within Sámi organizations in the 1970s and 1980s were undoubtedly significant.¹⁶ This can, in turn, be related to the postcolonial movement around the world, in which representatives of indigenous peoples and countries in the Third World began to reclaim history and tradition from Western possession.¹⁷ At the same time, there was much critical debate at universities and an increasing awareness of marginalized subjects in historical writing.

Crucial to the Sámi's entry into historical and social scientific discourse was the intense debate about Sámi rights in Norway in the late 1970s and early 80s. This debate came into focus as a result of the Alta affair, when the Norwegian government decided to undertake hydroelectric development of the Alta-Kautokeino River in Finnmark regardless of fierce protests by local authorities, environmentalists, and Sámi organizations. The ensuing debate as to whether or not the Sámi constituted an indigenous population with special historic rights inevitably came to involve archaeological and historical sources. This dispute undoubtedly contributed to a critical awareness among many researchers regarding the political role of history and archaeology in a multi-ethnic Norway.¹⁸ It also triggered discipline-specific critical analyses of this role and stimulated a number of new studies of Sámi history.

Another important reason why the Sámi past has today become an accepted part of historical and archaeological discourse was the establishment of universities in Umeå (1965), Tromsø (1972) and Rovaniemi (1979, the University of Lapland). This created academic institutions in the northernmost regions of Fennoscandia, which substantially boosted the existing research institutions in the region. Increasing numbers of

¹⁵ Otnes 1970; Gjessing 1973; Keskitalo 1976.

¹⁶ Stordahl 1996, 2000; Lanto and Mörkenstam 2008; Nyyssönen 2009.

¹⁷ Fanon 1967; Minde 1996, 2000.

¹⁸ Salvesen 1980; Schanche and Olsen 1983; Olsen 1986; Niemi and Salvesen 1987.

Sámi students were recruited to academic departments and contributed directly or indirectly to the setting of a new archaeological and historical agenda.

Making the Sámi visible played a central role in the political strategies adopted by Sámi organizations from the 1970s onward.¹⁹ The image of a homogenous nation-state needed to be disrupted, and it thus became impossible to ignore the presence of the Sámi. Uniquely effective in this respect was the protest during the Alta conflict when hunger-striking Sámi erected a Sámi tent (*lávvu*) on the square in front of the Norwegian Parliament in Oslo. Also, in terms of historical presence, visibility became an important strategy. In such situations, the use of concepts and names are often decisive. The coining of terms such as the 'Sámi Iron Age,' 'Sámi history,' and 'Sámi archaeology' must be seen in the light of attempts to create a space for an alternative Sámi past. New concepts attract attention and drive wedges into previously homogenous fields of knowledge. They also redefine and give new meaning to existing terms. Concepts like 'Norwegian archaeology,' 'the first Norwegians,' or 'the history of our people' thus took on other meanings in the 1980s. They lost their status as neutral, general terms.²⁰

1.3 SCOPE AND PERSPECTIVES

The purpose of this book is to provide a new synthesis of Sámi history to a broader, English-speaking audience. It largely follows our previous work in Norwegian,²¹ but the accounts and interpretations have been reexamined, modified, and updated in accordance with recent research. As with our original book, the primary objective is to give an overall, integrated, and wide-ranging presentation of the Sámi past that also is sensitive to regional and chronological variations. In general terms, our approach to this past may be described as one that takes into account the interplay between external and internal processes. To varying degrees, the Sámi have always been part of social and economic networks involving interactions with other peoples and things. This means that Sámi history cannot be limited to the Sámi settlement area, which in itself has changed and become more restricted. Processes of social, cultural, and economic interaction create

¹⁹ Brantenberg et al. 1995; Stordahl 1996; Lanto and Mörkenstam 2008; Nyssönen 2009.

²⁰ Schanche and Olsen 1983; Olsen 1986, 1998.

²¹ Hansen and Olsen 2004.

networks and links stretching far beyond this area and the Nordic region. The archaeological and historical material that forms the basis of this book also bears witness to this continuous dialogue between the familiar and the 'other.' At the same time, it is important not to restrict the scope of analysis to a narrow, 'relational' perspective, that is, one in which interesting things only occur when things Sámi meet things non-Sámi. For this reason, we have also emphasized the significance of the interactions, encounters, and negotiations that occurred internally between different Sámi interests, agencies, and lifestyles. This internal dynamic—though often in interplay with external circumstances—has contributed to the variety of socio-cultural manifestations and diverse historical trajectories with which this book is concerned.

Another major objective of this study is to challenge the image of an authentic, homogenous, and static Sámi culture. There has been a tendency, particularly in ethnographic literature on the Sámi, to depict change in negative terms so that the Sámi's encounter with other cultures, state formations, market economies, and modernity always brings about disruption, decline, and 'loss' of culture. Change has thus acquired a one-sided, negative connotation. In archaeological and historical research alike, there has also been a tendency to construct Sámi history almost as the antithesis of the history of the majority populations. While the latter are portrayed as belligerent, prone to change, individualistic, and hierarchical, the Sámi are equally narrowly depicted as peaceful, stable, collective, and egalitarian.²² Upon scrutiny, this stereotypical image is of course impossible to sustain and, as this book shows, variation and change is also an inevitable part of the Sámi past.

After the historical silence surrounding the Sámi was breached in earnest around 1980,²³ a substantial number of academic works have been written on Sámi archaeology and history. Sámi history is now taught at several universities and university colleges. Despite this increased effort, no concerted account exists which summarizes and synthesizes what has gradually, over the last forty years, become an extensive body of historical and archaeological research. Parts of this research are only available in the form of articles dispersed in various journals and in unpublished dissertations. Moreover, since this research has primarily been published in Nordic languages, it has not been accessible to a wider international audience of scholars and students. This book seeks to make this new body

²² Schanche 1993; Olsen 2000a.

²³ See, among others, Søbstad 1980; Lorenz 1981; Lindmark 1982; Huurre 1983.

of knowledge on Sámi history and archaeology more widely available in a comprehensive yet concise manner.

1.4 SÁMI HISTORY AS NORDIC HISTORY

In writing this book, we also want to show the ways in which the history of the Sámi is a significant and natural component of Nordic and European history. At a time when national and ethnic histories are being debated, writing a Sámi history may seem *passé*. Needless to say, histories that view cultures and identities as monolithic, bounded, and easily distinguishable from each other are no longer considered feasible. Nevertheless, the timely deconstruction of overly essentialist perceptions of culture must not lead us to the opposite extreme of regarding culture and ethnicity as irrelevant. On the contrary, the focus of much recent research on cultural variation, multiculturalism, ‘hybridization,’ and identity may actually be seen as a demonstration of their very relevance.

In many ways, this book can be read as a criticism of a persistent tradition of delimiting and purifying cultures. In a Nordic and European context, it also constitutes a timely corrective to histories written through the lenses of the nation-state. Moreover, writing the Sámi into Nordic history is important for the simple reason that without their participation, this would be less complete and interesting history. The exclusion of significant participants who have provided difference in the Nordic past has unquestionably resulted in poorer history.

The historical outline presented in this book is, in many ways, a complicated one. This is primarily due to the fact that the past *was* complex, even though this can never of course be adequately captured by historical representations. Emphasizing this complexity is nevertheless important in order to provide a corrective to the often simplistic tropes dominating many previous narratives of the Sámi past. Moreover, new and critical studies of the Sámi past have been received with a certain suspicion, and the very concept of ‘Sámi history’ itself has long had a latent political dimension. Needless to say, these suspicions are difficult to understand without proper attention to the backdrop of power that characterizes the relationship between the minority and the state. Consciously or not, it also functions as a strategy for derision, something that has often affected postcolonial history and research in that it sows doubt about the seriousness and scholarship of research carried out by ‘others.’ We hope this book will counter such doubts and will convey some of the quality—and integrity—that characterizes current archeological and historical research on the Sámi past.

CHAPTER TWO

CHANGING VIEWS ON THE ORIGINS OF THE SÁMI

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The question about the origins of the Sámi has been a recurrent topic of debate among researchers concerned with the history and culture of northern Scandinavia. This subject began to be discussed in earnest in the nineteenth century, in an age when nationalist and evolutionist currents of European social life and research brought the origins of peoples and nations into focus. This pursuit of peoples' origins was crucial to the early development of disciplines such as linguistics, anthropology, history, and archaeology. Researchers from these and other fields attempted to uncover the linguistic, racial, or historic 'primeval home' of various peoples, either within their current settlement area or in more remote places from which they were supposed to have migrated at an earlier date. Much of our modern thinking about origins and descent, exemplified by questions such as, "Who came first?" and "When did the Sámi arrive?" have their source in this nineteenth-century reasoning about identity and roots.

Concepts such as ethnicity and ethnic groups were hardly used in earlier research on cultural history. To the degree that they were used, they were ascribed a different meaning than that used in social and cultural studies today. References to cultural and ethnic differences at that time were usually made in terms of 'peoples,' 'races,' 'nations,' and 'cultures,' and many considered these terms almost synonymous. The definition of a people or culture was, to a large extent, based on the assumption that each such unit possessed a reasonably stable inventory of cultural, linguistic, and material traits. Each culture had its 'catalogue' of diagnostic characteristics and could be identified and distinguished from other peoples using this checklist. In other words, ethnicity and culture were perceived as bounded and objectively definable units, as expressed rather tellingly in the mosaic of material cultures on the archaeological and ethnological maps of Europe. These expectations of the boundedness and homogeneity of cultures were clearly related to the growth of nationalism. Nations were perceived almost as inherent entities and were assumed to be clearly distinguishable from other corresponding entities. The nationalist ideal of making political boundaries coincide exactly with cultural and ethnic

boundaries undoubtedly colored the interpretations of the cultural and ethnic conditions of the past.¹

In other words, early perceptions of ethnicity and culture were conditioned by prevailing nationalist discourses. Geographic distributions of archaeological finds were often interpreted with the socio-political territory of the nation-state as a point of reference.² The impact of racial theory and social Darwinism on political and scholarly thinking also resulted in the widely-held belief that mentality and behavioral patterns were 'inscribed' in people as the result of their biological origins. Cultural and ethnic variation could thus be read as a reflection of biological dissimilarity,³ an idea also related to the notion that history was reserved for a few, superior peoples (see chap. 1). By virtue of having brought about 'civilization,' these superior peoples had shown their ability to adapt and to progress. Other peoples lacked these skills and thus placed themselves outside history, resulting in the dichotomy between peoples *with* and peoples *without* history.

Views on the origins and historical identity of the Sámi in Fennoscandia⁴ changed dramatically during the second half of the nineteenth century. In the 1840s and 1850s, researchers still generally believed that the Sámi were descendents of the people who had lived in Scandinavia and northern Europe during the Stone Age. This view, however, was soon abandoned, and the Sámi were ascribed a more limited status as the original population of northern Fennoscandia. In the early twentieth century, their status was further marginalized. Several researchers at that time raised doubts as to whether the Sámi had ever had any 'original' existence in the Nordic countries. In several works, it was argued that the Sámi had migrated to Scandinavia from the east long after those who make up today's majority populations had established themselves there. Thus over the course of about fifty years, the historical status of the Sámi in Fennoscandia changed dramatically. From being Scandinavia's original population, they were rewritten as an alien people from the east. The view of the Sámi as an alien, eastern people naturally reinforced the conception of them as being primarily subjects for ethnographic study (see Chapter 1).

¹ Anderson 1991; Jones 1997.

² Jones 1997.

³ Young 1995; Malik 1996.

⁴ Fennoscandia (or Fenno-Scandinavia) is a geographic term normally used to designate the area made up by the Scandinavian Peninsula, Finland, and the Kola Peninsula.

In this chapter, we shall take a closer look at the discourse regarding the origins of the Sámi from the seventeenth century to the present day. We shall see how people have arrived at different answers to this question, and point to some of the circumstances that have caused a change in opinions. Finally, in this chapter we shall look at how cultural-historical research looks at this question today and present our own view on the emergence of Sámi ethnicity.

2.2 ORIGINAL POPULATION AND CULTURAL STEREOTYPES

As far back as the seventeenth century, European scholars had maintained that the Sámi (at that time usually called Finns or Lapps) were Scandinavia's original population, and in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, this became a widely-held view in scientific circles.⁵ A well-known Norwegian politician, Christian Magnus Falsen, summarized this belief in 1821 as follows:

...all of European Scandinavia, Norway included, was once inhabited by Finns. As Germanic or German peoples (Goths or Jother) moved into Sweden and Norway, these, the most ancient inhabitants known to us, were forced further and further northwards, where some of them still roam in the mountains, maintaining their age-old customs and practices.⁶

Well into the first half of the nineteenth century, several historians and linguists argued that the Sámi's original settlement area was far larger than it is today.⁷ In his important work, *Skandinaviska Nordens Urinvånare, ett försök i comparativa Ethnographien* (The Primitive inhabitants of Scandinavia. An essay on comparative ethnography), Swedish zoologist and archaeologist Sven Nilsson dealt with the issue in more detail.⁸ He claimed that Scandinavia and northern Europe had been inhabited by a "hyperborean" people during the Stone Age. Nilsson's concept of hyperborean people ('the people from beyond the North Wind') comes from classic Greek poetry about a mythical people who lived in a Golden Age, beyond the reach of humans.⁹ To Nilsson, the hyperboreans were a "polar race" who had lived throughout much of northern and western Europe

⁵ Baglo 2001, 33.

⁶ Falsen 1821, 95.

⁷ Geijer 1825; Rask 1834.

⁸ Nilsson 1838, 43.

⁹ Baglo 2001, 21.

during the Stone Age. It was they who had built the massive stone tombs (megaliths) seen in Denmark and southern Sweden. Later, migrating Celtic tribes forced them to flee to the uninhabited areas in the north. The hyperboreans' descendents in Scandinavia were the Sámi, Nilsson asserted, reaching his conclusion on the basis of skull measurements carried out by the craniologist A. A. Retzius. He compared skulls from southern Scandinavian megalithic graves with the skull shapes of living Sámi and Scandinavian populations (see fig. 1). These measurements showed that the skulls found in Stone Age graves correlated best with the skull measurements of the Sámi population.¹⁰

Nilsson enjoyed the support of the Norwegian historian Rudolf Keyser in his conviction that the Sámi were Scandinavia's original inhabitants. In Keyser's work, *Om Nordmændenes Herkomst og Folkeslægtskap* (The Ancestry and descent of the Norwegians), he claimed that the Sámi, who were, "leading a wretched nomadic life in the northernmost fringes of the country," were Norway's first inhabitants. He arrived at this conclusion on the basis of a theory that various prehistoric periods (the Stone, Bronze, and Iron Ages) represented people at various stages of development (or 'refinement'). The national character and degree of development of the Sámi suggested that they were close to the 'original,' in other words, most primitive state. Keyser thus drew the conclusion that the Stone Age was Sámi, the Bronze Age was Celtic, and the "ruling inhabitants of the Scandinavian North" were descendents of the Germanic people, who represented the Iron Age.¹¹

Another renowned Norwegian historian, P. A. Munch, also shared this view of the Sámi as the original population of Norway and Scandinavia. In his work *Det Norske Folks Historie* (The History of the Norwegian people), he expressed the view that Stone Age tools found in Norway must have been the work of "a widely roaming nomadic hunting people" like the Sámi. Munch, as a leading representative of a Norwegian national school of history, might have felt that it was a problem that the Norwegians were not the first inhabitants of Norway. In any case, he found it necessary to offer the following clarification: "So although Norway was inhabited in a sense, it was not settled before the arrival of our ancestors. And it is not until it becomes *settled* [emphasis ours] that a country's history as such begins."¹² There could thus be no doubt as to which people had created that history.

¹⁰ Nilsson 1838, 10–12.

¹¹ Keyser 1839, 453.

¹² Munch 1852, 4.

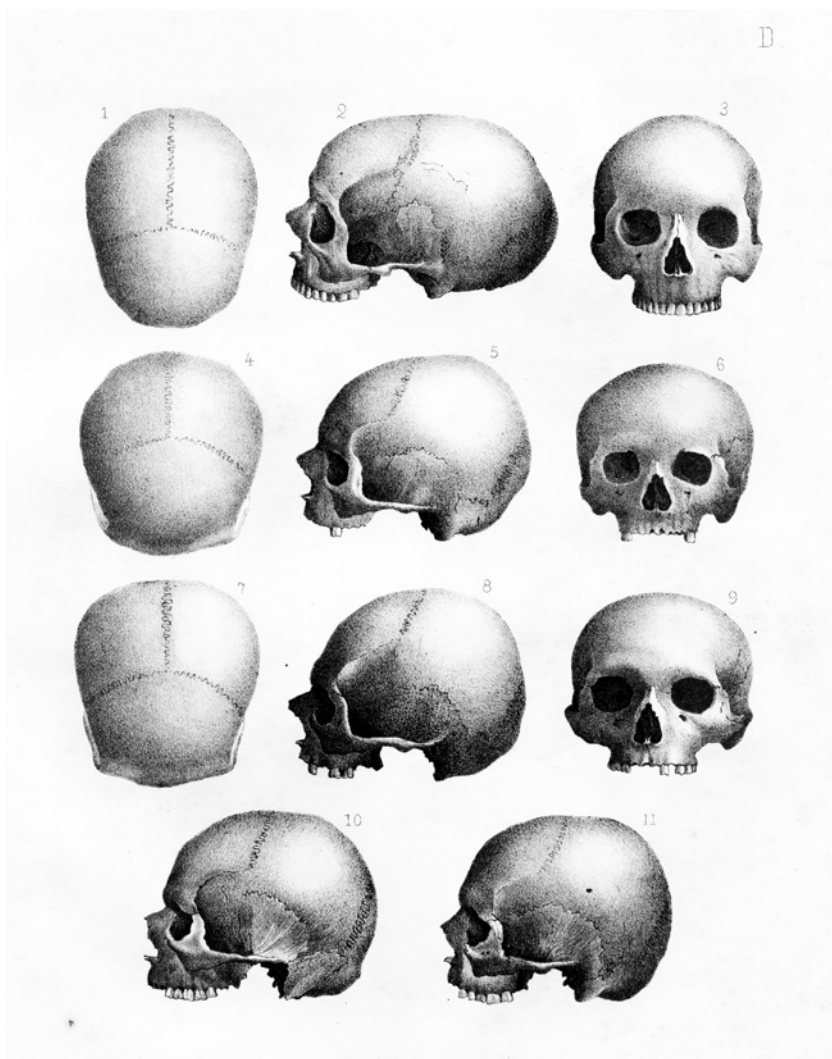


Fig. 1. S. Nilsson's comparative juxtapositioning of skulls found in Stone Age graves (skull 4–6, 10) with newer skulls of Swedes ("Goths") (skull 1–3) and Sámi ("Lapps") (skull 7–9, 11) (from Nilsson 1838).

As the body of archaeological material gradually increased, it became clear, however, that the Stone Age in northern Scandinavia had been different from that of southern Scandinavia. For example, in the north tools were largely made of slate rather than flint. In the 1860s, this finding led two archaeologists, the Swede Hans Hildebrand and the Norwegian Oluf Rygh, to draw the conclusion that there must have been a cultural dualism in Scandinavia

during the Stone Age. Since the use of slate seemed to be largely limited to the Sámi settlement area, the 'slate culture' was associated with the Sámi: "They are found most frequently in the counties of Tromsø and Finnmark, where ordinary stone objects are extremely rare; it is thus reasonable to attribute them to the Lapps."¹³ It is also noteworthy that the geological characteristics of flint and slate even were used to illustrate the differences in cultural characteristics and mentality between the Scandinavians and the Sámi: while flint was hard and durable, and required skill, planning, and hard work to transform it into tools, slate was soft and perishable, and its use required no special skills, effort, or planning.¹⁴ Even as late as 1941, the otherwise rather pro-Sámi archaeologist, Gutorm Gjessing, made this link between the use of slate and Sámi mentality. In an attempt to explain why people in northern Norway had not used harder, more durable raw materials, he wrote:

Part of the reason lies in the common Arctic temperament. Slate is much easier to work than flint: it takes less time, demands less planning and effort. So despite his all-out-effort mentality, Arctic man does no more work than absolutely necessary. . . . If a tool will do in a pinch with the least amount of effort, he's probably happy. He is often less concerned if the durability is so-so.¹⁵

The rejection in the 1860s of any connection between the Sámi and the Stone Age populations of southern Scandinavia was clearly not only related to new finds and increased empirical material; it was also affected by concurrent changes in the political and scientific conceptions of the Sámi in Scandinavian society.¹⁶ While earlier descriptions of the Sámi often contained positive characteristics, from this point on they were more subject to disparaging appraisals. This change in attitude to the 'others' occurred throughout the Western world in the mid-nineteenth century, and the previously idealized 'noble savage' was now almost universally proclaimed indolent, immoral, and drunken. This change was bound up with the breakthrough of evolutionism and racial theory, which contributed to Social Darwinism gaining a foothold as a political and ideological doctrine in the Western world. For example, one implication of Nilsson's theory of the Sámi as the original population of Scandinavia was that they had built the impressive megalithic tombs. Considering the changed conception of the Sámi, this became unthinkable. As one Norwegian archaeologist

¹³ Rygh 1867, 100.

¹⁴ Furset 1994, 46–47.

¹⁵ Gjessing 1941, 32–33.

¹⁶ Baglo 2001.

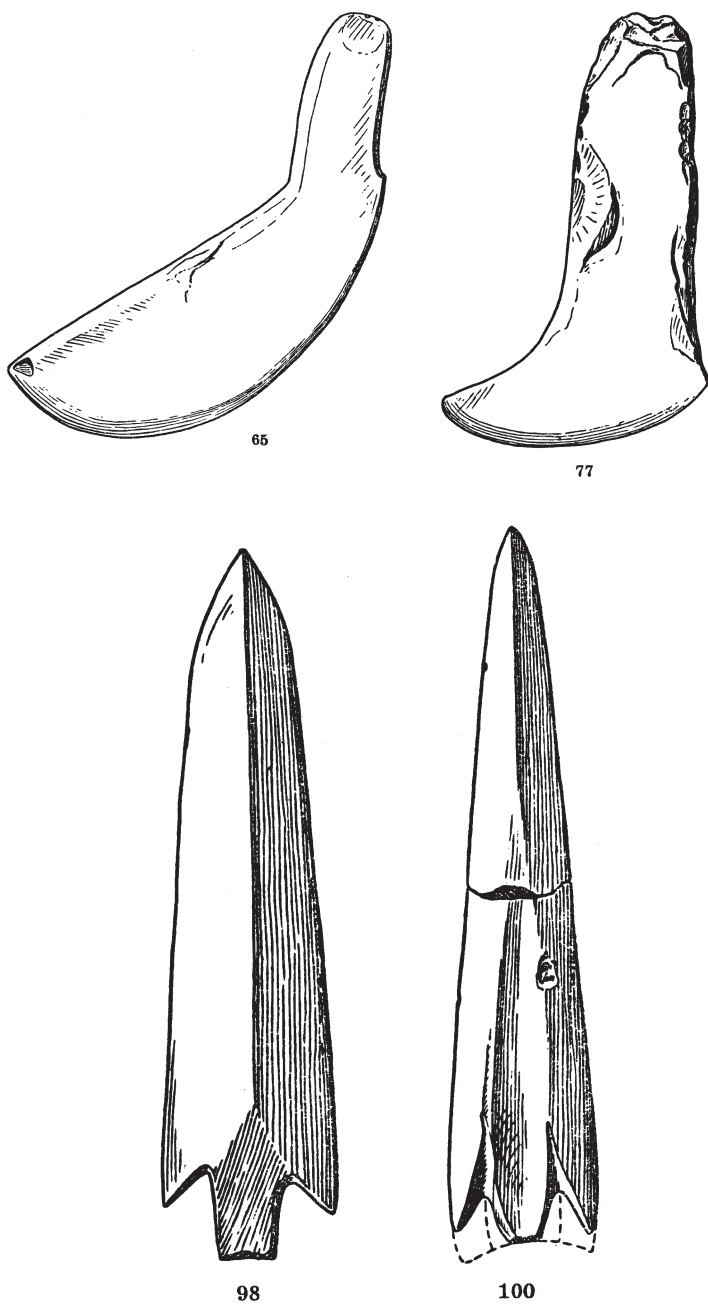


Fig. 2. Knives and spear points typical of “the slate culture” (sketch from Gjessing 1942).

put it, “But these mighty tombs . . . demanded such massive use of human strength, time, and patient effort, which one cannot presume to have existed among these comparatively few, dispersed people, so little accustomed to heavy physical work.”¹⁷ To Gustaf von Düben, author of the first real ethnographic monograph on the Sámi, the conclusion was drawn in the form of an ironic question: “When did the Lapps become master builders?”¹⁸

2.3 AN ALIEN PEOPLE FROM THE EAST

As early as the 1870s, researchers like Worsaae and von Düben argued that the Sámi had not migrated into Scandinavia “until late, in a wave from the east via northern Russia.”¹⁹ In the early twentieth century, this interpretation became more or less fixed in cultural-historical discourses. From then on, the common conception was that the Sámi were an alien people from the east and that their presence in Scandinavia was the result of a relatively late migration from Russia or Siberia. The link between the Sámi and the ‘slate culture’ was rejected, although some researchers stuck to this ‘Lapp hypothesis’ for a while. One factor which contributed to the ‘de-Sámification’ of the northern Scandinavian Stone Age was the fact that considerable numbers of slate tools had also been found in southern regions, in southeastern and western Norway, and in Trøndelag. In 1891, Yngvar Nielsen expressed the belief that the Sámi had only emerged in their current southernmost settlement area (Trøndelag and Hedmark) within the last 200 years and that, consequently, the Sámi could not claim any original presence or be associated with the slate tools found there.²⁰

A seminal, if controversial, figure in the debate on the origins of the Sámi was the geologist A. M. Hansen, author of the two books, *Landnåm i Norge* (The Settlement of Norway) and *Oldtidens Nordmænd* (Norwegians of Antiquity).²¹ In these works, he goes to great lengths to deny any presence of the Sámi in Norway during prehistoric times. Based on what was, to put it mildly, a hodgepodge of evidence gleaned from history, toponymy, physical anthropology, and archaeology, Hansen concluded

¹⁷ Winther 1978, 107.

¹⁸ Von Düben 1873, 369.

¹⁹ Worsaae 1872, 328; Baglo 2001, 48.

²⁰ Nielsen 1891, 20.

²¹ Hansen, 1904, 1907.

that there must have been two original ‘races’ in Scandinavia, but that the Sámi did not belong to either of them. There was the Alpine race who were short build and had short skulls, and a second tall, blond, long-skulled race. The non-Aryan, short-skulled race was Scandinavia’s true original population, represented archaeologically by such disparate finds as the kitchen middens in Denmark, the slate culture in northern Scandinavia, and the Kjelmoøy finds from South Varanger, in eastern Finnmark. This was a coastal hunter-fisher culture, which had gradually been forced northward by the long-skulled Aryans. The non-Aryan race had left its mark in the historical sources as ‘Finns,’ a people Hansen dismisses as having nothing to do with the Sámi (Lapps) (see box text: The Naming of the Sámi). The latter had migrated into the region as reindeer-herding nomads “at a late stage and as an element of little importance,” more precisely, in the Middle Ages. Hansen found support for his conviction that the Finns of the historical sources could not be the Sámi since these sources attributed *positive* characteristics to them, which, in his opinion, were unlikely to have been ascribed to the Sámi:

While the dwarfish Lapps with their frail limbs, and their conspicuous inferiority, must always have stood out, as now, simply as an object of the Norwegians’ contempt, the respect with which the Norsemen speak of the ancient Finns is understandable enough... they were not feeble dwarves but of medium height, strong and healthy hunters, unlike the Aryan farmers... They caught whales and walrus from small boats—of which the Lapps, who to this day are poor seamen, are unlikely to have been capable of. In Leem’s day, they still had peculiar fishing tackle, different from that of the Norwegians in that it was for use at sea, and not something one could imagine the Lapps inventing... The fact that the hunting and trapping Finns seem chiefly to have chosen to reside at the very edge of the open sea clearly does not harmonize with the natural inclinations of the Lapps.²²

Similarly, Hansen argued that the large burial ground at Mortensnes, in Varanger, eastern Finnmark, with approximately 250 scree graves, could not have been Sámi. The bodies had been laid in “genuine burial chambers, painstakingly constructed using flagstones,” whereas the Sámi disposed of their dead “in the easiest way possible.”²³ Furthermore, the graves contained “utterly un-Lappish grave equipment” such as ceramics, metal, and the remains of a boat. Hansen’s stereotype of the Sámi as a mountain people bound to their reindeer was undoubtedly an intrinsic part of the

²² Hansen 1907, 134.

²³ Ibid., 125.

cultural-historical literature.²⁴ The famous Kjelmøy finds could therefore also be written off as not being Sámi: “the refined sealing harpoons” precluded any connection to the “reindeer-nomadic Lapps.”²⁵

In 1909, the renowned Norwegian archaeologist, A. W. Brøgger, published *Den arktiske stenaldre i Norge* (The Arctic Stone Age in Norway). In this work, he argues strongly against the ‘Lapp hypothesis,’ that the Sámi had any connection with the ‘slate culture’ and the Arctic Stone Age. One of his arguments, already mentioned, was that tools of slate were found in large quantities outside the present Sámi settlement area. His most important argument, however, only makes sense if it is seen in the light of contemporary views of the Sámi as static, lacking the capacity for cultural and technological change. To Brøgger, the Arctic Stone Age was a northern Scandinavian and Baltic undertaking, which, in addition to slate technology, was represented by a particular type of pottery as well as rock carvings. Since these elements were absent in the historical records of Sámi culture, the Arctic Stone Age could not be Sámi:

We have no evidence that the Lapps ever had such an extensive pottery industry as that encountered across the Arctic-Baltic settlements, or that the Lapps have ever carved figures in rocks like the petroglyphs we have examined in the Arctic. Finally, we do not know whether the Lapps had a relatively advanced stone industry like that witnessed by the slate points, knives, and axes.²⁶

That the Sámi, on par with the ‘historical’ people of Scandinavia, might have been capable of changing their cultural expressions and technology, and replacing old things with new ones, was unthinkable—which is why contemporary Sámi could not possibly be descendents of ‘the slate culture.’ Moreover, Brøgger saw it as unreasonable “to assume that the Lapps, whose culture is bound up with semi-tame reindeer, had either the time or any reason to develop such pottery and a stone industry.”²⁷

2.4 RACE RESEARCH AND IMMIGRATION ROUTES

From about 1910 to 1960, archaeologists and historians rarely engaged explicitly with the subject of Sámi history. The general consensus that they were

²⁴ Baglo 2001.

²⁵ Hansen 1907, 125–126; Baglo 2001, 51–53, 144–118.

²⁶ Brøgger 1909, 165.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 165.

an alien, eastern people, a non-European ‘other,’ clarified their status as an ethnographic category. As the archaeologist Haakon Shetelig put it in 1925, “By and large, the Lapps have hardly had any significance worth mentioning for the oldest Scandinavian cultural periods.”²⁸ There was, however, another branch of research that distinguished itself in the study of Sámi origins: physical anthropology. By identifying ‘typical’ Sámi and Nordic racial characteristics, primarily based on skull shape, a reliable basis was sought for tracing the first races to inhabit the northern regions. The Sámi material came from measurements taken from living individuals and from skeletal material found in Christian and pre-Christian burial sites. The investigations were frequently done in such a way that the Sámi found them offensive and degrading.²⁹

The best-known work of this kind was K. E. Schreiner’s two-volume study, *Zur Osteologie der Lappen* (On the osteology of the Lapps).³⁰ He dealt with questions about what race the Sámi belonged to and what their possible origins were. Like other anthropologists before him, he believed the most ‘typical’ Sámi racial characteristics were those that diverged most distinctively from the ideal features of the Nordic race. He visualized a common primordial race that would later become proto-Lapps, proto-Alpines (from whom parts of Norway’s western coastal population are descended), and proto-Mongols in northern Europe. While the proto-Alpines pushed westward and the proto-Mongols eastward, where they both differentiated over time, the proto-Sámi found themselves a “primeval home” in what later became the Urals and “closed themselves off” from further specialization. From this original home, they later migrated to Finland and the Scandinavian peninsula.³¹ In a later work, Schreiner also maintained that a primeval Nordic people other than the Sámi constituted the original population of Finnmark.³² He based this conclusion on the shape of a skull found in a Late Stone Age grave in Nyelv, Varanger. According to Schreiner, this was evidence of a proto-Scandinavian people who had been isolated from their kin to the south towards the end of the Stone Age and were later absorbed by migrant peoples of Sámi and eastern Baltic types. This development

²⁸ Shetelig 1925, 31.

²⁹ Evjen 1997; Schanche 1997.

³⁰ Schreiner 1932, 1935.

³¹ Schanche 2000, 47.

³² Schreiner 1940.

was supposed to explain the racial mix that scholars believed they had found in later populations.

An important archaeological study in terms of the origins of the Sámi was also published in this period. In 1929, the Swedish archaeologist, Gustaf Hallström, presented a hypothesis on how and when the Sámi migration to Scandinavia had taken place. His theory was extremely influential and has had considerable popularity until quite recently. Hallström supported Brøgger in rejecting the link between the Sámi and the slate culture, and he maintained that the Stone Age in northern Scandinavia involved the same peoples as those living in the south:

The Stone Age in Norrland and Lappland should be seen as a direct offshoot of the southern and central Swedish Stone Age, and no other race or races than those that lived in southern and central Sweden should be considered as having lived in Norrland and Lappland. Furthermore, judging from archaeological material, there is no trace of any form of culture or tools that can be traced back to the Lapps or their forefathers.³³

Slate was used as a raw material in the north because of the lack of flint, which meant that this material therefore had no ethnic implications. Hallström ascribed the presence of the Sámi to a migration that had taken place in the pre-Roman and Roman Iron Ages. A deterioration in the climate resulted in the depopulation of large areas of northern Scandinavia, which left the land open to an alien, eastern ('primeval Lappish') inland people. In archaeological terms, this migration was marked by eastern bronze artifacts and asbestos pottery.

Another archaeologist of the interwar period who addressed the origins of the Sámi was Gutorm Gjessing. In *Fra steinalder til jernalder i Finnmark* (From the Stone Age to the Iron Age in Finnmark), he opposed Hallström's conclusion that the Sámi had migrated to the region so late, especially given that they were an inland people. This was because he believed he could see traces of a fully-developed, coastal Sámi culture in Finnmark in the first century BC. In several works, Gjessing implies links between the Sámi and the previous Stone Age population in the north, although his conclusions are vague and in part, contradictory. In line with the prevailing consensus, he considered the oldest Sámi finds (including the Kjelmøy material) as showing eastern traits or cultural loans; he also viewed these as "alien features in Finnmark."³⁴ In another context, however, he hints

³³ Hallström 1929, 56.

³⁴ Gjessing 1935, 70.

at links between the Sámi 'primeval race' and the Komsa culture of the early Stone Age.³⁵ Many of the conclusions by Gjessing and other cultural historians bear the hallmark of the dominant position of race research at the time. Since the archaeological source material is either lacking or ambiguous, the belief in ethnicity as a biological, racial phenomenon was ultimately decisive.³⁶

Physical anthropology continued to hold a strong position in relation to the issue of the origins of the Sámi well into the post-war era. In connection with archaeologist Povl Simonsen's large-scale archaeological excavations in Varanger in the 1950s, the anthropologists Getz and Torgersen re-examined earlier and newly-found skeletal material from the Late Stone Age and Early Sámi Iron Age. They concluded, like Schreiner in 1941, that Finnmark had been inhabited by a primeval Nordic people in the Early Stone Age.³⁷ However, in his archaeological interpretation of the finds, Simonsen reached a different conclusion.³⁸ He found nothing to indicate contact with southern Scandinavian Stone Age people; on the contrary, he saw a clear continuity between the Stone Age and the Sámi Iron Age in Varanger. He also calls these Stone Age finds 'proto-Sámi.' Moreover, Simonsen was the first researcher to question the notion of Sámi ethnicity as a ready-made cultural or biological 'product,' that at some point in time entered the Nordic scene as a result of migration. Having discussed the physical anthropological results and hinting at the possibility of multiple "racial components" in the Sámi population, he states:

On this basis, one comes to the conclusion that the crucial question, "When did the Sámi arrive?" may simply be wrongly posed. Instead, we should be asking, "At what point in time did a concept arise that we can permit ourselves to call Sámi?"³⁹

In other words, Simonsen did not see Sámi ethnicity as an immutable category introduced from outside, but as a category that came into being as a result of social and cultural processes taking place in northern Fennoscandia. However, just how this ethnogenesis came about in specific terms, he has little to say. An adequate understanding of these

³⁵ Gjessing 1941.

³⁶ Schanche 2000.

³⁷ Getz and Torgerson 1959.

³⁸ Simonsen 1959.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 17.

processes was still hampered by physical anthropology's hegemony in this field. Although most archaeologists and historians realized that race, culture, and ethnicity were not synonymous terms, they still lacked a suitable theoretical and analytical framework within which to consider this issue.

2.5 NEW PERSPECTIVES ON ETHNICITY AND SÁMI ETHNOGENESIS

It is not a great exaggeration to say that such a framework became available with the work of the social anthropologist, Fredrik Barth. Of particular importance was his introduction to the edited volume *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*, in which Barth challenged the old idea that cultural variation is discontinuous; that is to say, that every people had a common culture, and that there were clear differences that distinguished each such culture from the others. Furthermore, geographical and social isolation were the critical factors that explained this cultural dissimilarity. Anthropologists and cultural historians at that time had concentrated much of their attention on processes taking place *within* a group or society rather than studying the processes taking place *among* groups. In his well-known introduction, Barth called attention to two serious problems with this isolationist paradigm:

First, it is clear that boundaries persist despite the flow of personnel across them...categorical ethnic distinctions do not depend on an absence of mobility, contact and information... Secondly, one finds that stable, persisting, and often vitally important social relations are maintained across such boundaries and are frequently based precisely on the dichotomized ethnic statuses. In other words, ethnic distinctions do not depend on an absence of social interaction and acceptance, but are quite the contrary often the very foundations on which embracing social systems are built.⁴⁰

Since the 1970s, the dominant view in Western social science has been that ethnicity is a collective identity that emerges from the interaction between groups. Ethnic groups cannot be defined objectively based on certain universal, static characteristics, but only subjectively in that membership in a group is defined through self-identification and the identification of others. Ethnicity is primarily perceived as consciousness of one's own identity vis-à-vis other groups, constituted in a kind of 'us-them' opposition. The logical consequence is that ethnicity is not a relevant factor, or cannot exist, for groups without knowledge of other groups different from themselves. Ethnicity primarily has to do with peoples in contact with one another and the organization of this type of contact.

⁴⁰ Barth 1969, 9–10.

Ethnic groups often base their identity, and consequently their understanding of dissimilarity from other groups, on a conception of a common culture and/or common origins. Attempts are often made to objectify these dissimilarities by means of reference to cultural, linguistic, religious, historical, physical, or geographical characteristics. This can, however, change over time and across cultural and social contexts. What it meant to be Norwegian, and how Norwegian identity was manifested and communicated in the nineteenth century, was of course very different from the way Norwegian identity is expressed today. However, despite the differences in expression, Norwegians are still Norwegians. What has been maintained over time can therefore be said to be the boundary between Norwegians and others. That is to say, people have found it meaningful to perceive themselves as different from others.

For various reasons, ten years would pass before Barth's dynamic view of ethnicity had an impact on research into the emergence of Sámi ethnicity. In 1983, however, social anthropologist and archaeologist Knut Odner published a book in which Barth's theory forms the basis for understanding the emergence and maintenance of Sámi ethnicity. In the introduction to his study, Odner urges us to stop asking questions such as, "When did the Sámi arrive and where did they come from?" For him, the crucial question is rather, "*Why* did Sámi ethnicity arise and *how* has it been maintained to the present day?" Using Barth's theory of ethnicity, Odner asserts that Sámi ethnicity arose as a result of contact between the hunter population of northern Fennoscandia and the surrounding farming societies. Whereas the hunter-gatherer communities in this area had little contact with communities outside the region during the Stone Age, contact increased substantially around the beginning of the Christian era. This contact led to an increasing sense of solidarity among the hunter-gatherer societies, a common identity engendered by awareness of the distinction between 'us' (hunters) and 'them' (farmers).

Odner maintains that this ethnic standardization of the hunter population occurred in southern Finland in the early Roman Era (AD 0–200). During this period, the area surrounding the Gulf of Finland increased tremendously in economic significance. The extension of the limits of the Roman Empire from southern into central Europe meant that the Baltic Sea and the Gulf of Finland became an important transit area for the trade in furs from the north. According to Odner, the desire to trade with the hunter-gatherer population of the north encouraged Finnish-speaking peasants from Estonia to settle in southern Finland as farmers and middlemen in trade. The seeds of Sámi ethnicity lie in the contact established between this peasant population and the original hunters.

According to Odner, this process involved three stages:

1. During the initial phase, when contact was at the embryonic stage, the hunter-gatherer population adopted the language of the Finns. Odner justifies this change of language on the basis of the affinity between Finnish and Sámi, and by referring to various ethnographic contexts, where hunter-gatherers in contact with farmers often adopt the language and other cultural features from the latter. This occurs as part of an interactional strategy: by imitating the cultural expression of the farmers, one signals affiliation and solidarity, thus securing access to the farmers' products.
2. In the next phase, when the relationship between farmers and hunters becomes more extensive, a clearer, better-defined apparatus of symbols is required to distinguish between the two groups. During this phase, the Sámi make themselves dependent on products from outside the region and in turn, specialize in producing goods the Finns want. Stricter ethnic organization is required and a set of symbols is developed which mutually defines the groups. The development of a Sámi language was, according to Odner, an important part of this contrast (a language close enough to facilitate communication, but nonetheless different). In this phase, Sámi ethnicity becomes institutionalized as a definite social category in southern Finland (probably in the third or fourth century AD).
3. In the third phase (the following centuries of the Early and Late Iron Age) this ethnic 'package' spreads among the other foraging groups in northern Fennoscandia. Sámi identity became linked to a hunter identity, and the fur trade was crucial to the emergence and diffusion of this identity. The economic advantages of participating in the fur trade lead to the rapid spread of Sámi ethnicity over much of northern Fennoscandia. Odner explains how this happened:

We can imagine that groups that had not yet accepted Sámi ethnicity would observe successful transactions between neighboring groups and Finnish traders, transactions that were conditional on signaling Sámi ethnicity. By modeling their own social practice accordingly—that is, by themselves adopting Sámi ethnicity—they would similarly gain access to the same types of transactions and products.⁴¹

⁴¹ Odner 1983, 110.

According to Odner, the hunter-gatherer population of northern Fennoscandia actually *chose* to adopt Sámi ethnicity because it was economically advantageous for them. Because of this choice, they were defined as desirable trading partners and gained access to products controlled by the surrounding foraging population. Odner thus suggests that Sámi ethnicity did not evolve as a result of migration from the east, but as a result of social and economic contacts between the hunter-gatherer population and, in the first instance, a Finnish farming population.

However, he also rejects the hypothesis that the establishment of Germanic or 'Scandinavian' ethnicity along the coast of northern Norway and Norrland can be explained in terms of migration from the south. Odner's idea, namely, is that northern Fennoscandia originally had various groups of hunter communities without any clearly superior ethnic organization. In the Early Iron Age, however, ethnic differentiation took place into two main categories. The eastern and northeastern groups became Sámi, while others adopted a (northern) Germanic ethnicity. It is the latter development that occurred among the original population along the coast of Nordland and south Troms (and probably along the coast of Norrland as well).

What happened, according to Odner, was that in the Early Iron Age, extensive social stratification processes occurred along the coast of western Norway as far north as the Tromsø area. The original, relatively egalitarian, social organization was replaced by a hierarchical one at the same time as the foraging economy gave way to agriculture and farming. Chieftaincies also emerged in this period, a distinctly "aggressive social organization" with socio-political rivalry and warrior culture as part of its logic (see fig. 3). In order to prevent this from leading to collapse, conflicts had to be overcome by constantly entering into and confirming alliances through gift exchange, feasts, and intermarriage between chieftaincies.

The newly-established chieftaincies in the north had to turn to the south to find similarly organized societies. A Germanic culture with specific forms of expression in terms of cosmology, burial rites, weapons, ornaments, dress, and house types had already spread rapidly through much of northwestern Europe in the Roman Age and the migration period. According to Odner, the adoption of Germanic ethnicity was required for participating in these southern networks and alliances as well as for maintaining a social structure in the north. As a consequence, a marked signaling of Germanic ethnicity occurred in the coastal areas as far north as Troms around AD 200–300. This, he believes, is best understood in terms of the population of these areas choosing to define themselves



Fig. 3. Grave goods from warrior burial dating to the first half of the third century AD at Bø, Engeløy, Steigen. The deceased's equipment is on a par with rich Germanic warrior graves from this period. Analyses of clothing remains and weapons might indicate that the buried chieftain (?) earlier on could have been in the service of the Roman army (from Sjøvold 1962).

as Germanic—or seeing themselves as forced to do so if they wished to maintain a hierarchical social structure. This must also be seen in the light of the fact that groups in the inland and northern parts of Fennoscandia adopted Sámi ethnicity.

Odner's book engendered an entirely new environment for cultural-historical research into the origins of Sámi ethnicity, and this stimulated a great deal of debate and several new studies. Even though a few of these have drawn conclusions that diverge from his, and have revealed some serious empirical weaknesses in his study, the general argument of Odner's interactional model has been widely accepted. The crucial question is when, and in relation to whom, we can identify interaction at a level that would give rise to ethnogenesis along the lines of Odner's model. In the final part of this chapter, we present some views on this issue from more recent research.

2.6 THE EMERGENCE OF SÁMI ETHNICITY: A REVISED MODEL

Odner's model for the emergence of Sámi ethnicity requires conscious actors who *deliberately choose* to become Sámi because this serves their economic motives. The sum of many such choices is that Sámi ethnicity

is adopted over a large area. This generative model can, however, be expanded and nuanced in accordance with the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's theory of practice, as demonstrated by the British archaeologist Siân Jones.⁴² Central to Bourdieu's theory is the concept of *habitus*, which is his expression for the local life world. This life world is constituted by sets of interacting material, social, and cosmological dispositions or resources. It is governed by a practical logic requiring a practical mastery, a 'knowing how.' *Habitus* is created by people, but at the same time it forms the way people create in an ever ongoing, reciprocal, constitutive process. As in the case of the British sociologist Anthony Giddens' theory of structuration, *habitus* is both the result of, and the prerequisite for, action. Since the reproduction of *habitus* is to a large extent based on implicit (and practical) rather than discursive knowledge, these local life worlds tend to be self-affirming. They are not questioned to any great extent and normally people are barely concerned with alternatives or other ways of living or thinking. Subjective and social divisions are objectified through reference to cosmology and ancestry, and are confirmed, for example, in the socio-spatial organization of dwellings and landscapes. The fact that social, material, and ideological aspects mutually confirm each other results in a social experience Bourdieu calls *doxa*, which is described as a form of objectification or naturalization of social life worlds. Society and culture are taken for granted and are not subject to conscious, articulated negotiation.⁴³

However, this doxic knowledge will sooner or later be challenged. This may occur through confrontation with other, different societies, for example through trade, colonization, or other forms of cultural contact. Such confrontations with other life worlds and mindsets may lead to things which have previously been taken for granted and have not been subject to reflection or doubt becoming topics for debate and argumentation. Consciousness-raising of this kind can be crucial in the formation, reproduction, and potential transformation of ethnic categories. Cultural differences must now be justified as 'our' way of doing things vis-à-vis the ways of others. The local cultural tradition that was previously taken for granted may be mobilized as a basis for a conscious representation of cultural—and ethnic—identity. It must be systematized and possibly manipulated to adapt to the new context. In this process, certain cultural

⁴² Jones 1997.

⁴³ Bourdieu 1977.

elements (both existing and invented) may be emphasized in order to express both distinctive characteristics and dissimilarity to other cultural traditions. In other words, we are dealing with a form of objectification or stereotyping of social differences.⁴⁴

By way of example, Jones points to a concrete ethno-historical case in point. The Tswana were a group of hierarchically organized tribes in southern Africa who had gradually settled in the Kalahari Desert. Through contact and communication between the Tswana tribes and European missionaries, both groups began to recognize the differences between them: they objectified their own worlds in relation to the other, new one, thereby creating their own cultures as homogenous and distinct. Of course, this cultural construction was neither accidental nor contrived, but was rather based on various cultural experiences and traditions. The Tswana's former identity had been based on internal division into different units on the basis of totemic affiliations. Thus, identity descriptions based on contrasts were evident in both pre-colonial and colonial contexts. However, colonization gave rise to an entirely new situation, in which internal dissimilarities were downplayed; the Tswana tradition was objectified as an overall cultural unit that bound together the Tswana groups and contrasted them with whites.

Independently of when it happened and with whom they traded, we believe that a similar perspective is fruitful for understanding the emergence of Sámi ethnicity among the hunter-gatherer population of Fennoscandia. By this, we mean that Sámi ethnicity as a conscious identity vis-à-vis other groups, an ethnic identity, developed through an awareness of the Sámi's cultural dissimilarity from others. Throughout the Stone Age, northern Fennoscandia was probably characterized by local interaction between relatively similar communities. These peoples' primary collective identities were linked to local communities (bands or territorial groups) or family groups. Interaction was largely restricted to the local level, between homogenous neighboring groups, although contact with more distant and diverse communities can also be documented.

However, in the early Metal Age (1800–0 BC), and particularly in the first millennium BC, there was a marked increase in this kind of contact. Imported eastern finds (iron artifacts, bronzes and casting molds) show that the foraging communities of northern Fennoscandia had relatively extensive contact with eastern Russian metal-producing communities,

⁴⁴ Jones 1997, 95.

primarily the Ananjin culture (800–200 BC). This contact is assumed to have been based on trade involving the exchange of furs and metals.⁴⁵ Contact between the northern hunting communities and eastern metal-producing, farming communities may be one triggering factor that resulted in the ‘discovery’ of distinctive cultural characteristics and differences, thus stimulating new ways of articulation.

An equally or even more important triggering factor was the social and economic processes of change that took place at the same time along the north Norwegian coast of Nordland and Troms. The hunting societies along this coast became increasingly involved in social and economic transactions with southern Scandinavian Bronze Age and Early Iron Age societies. Gradually, as these societies started to adopt farming, new social forms developed and soon those former hunting societies exhibited cultural affinity with agricultural societies further south in Scandinavia. Corresponding processes seem to have been taking place along the coast of the Gulf of Bothnia. Like Odner, we believe these processes of change were crucial for the later ‘Germanization’ of these societies (see chap. 3). Thus, in the first millennium BC, the hunter-gatherer communities in interior and northern Fennoscandia were facing groups exhibiting distinct differences from their own way of life. More intense contact with communities to the east and south, as well as the processes of social and economic change on the coast, all contributed to a new cultural and ethnic situation. The relative homogeneity that earlier characterized the foraging cultures in the north was disrupted, giving way to the ethnic dualism which would later become apparent.

The emergence of widespread and uniform terms of material expressions, especially Kjemøy pottery which began to be used in much of the Sámi area in the last millennium BC,⁴⁶ can be interpreted as a form of objectification or stereotyping of cultural peculiarities and difference from others. However, the creation of such material forms should not be seen as a reflection of a mentally-generated awareness of one’s own peculiarity and difference. Material culture may also have been important for the very emergence and consolidation of this awareness. The creation of a uniform material repertoire among the northern hunter-gatherers may, over time, have had consequences for people; objects may have in turn affected the people and reminded them of their peculiarity and difference from others.

⁴⁵ Bakka 1976; Huurre 1986; Baudou 1992; Olsen 1994.

⁴⁶ Carpelan 1979; Jørgensen and Olsen 1988.

It seems that after this early formative phase, the need for a deliberate symbolic articulation of Sámi ethnicity changed. Once the production of Kjelmøy pottery had ceased during the early centuries AD, it is not until the Viking Age that material/ symbolic cultural manifestations with a similar geographical distribution can be observed. Ethnic differentiation during the Iron Age, to which we will return in the next chapter, was articulated more indirectly, through social structures, economic organization, dwellings, settlement patterns, and territorial affiliation. This seems to have provided an adequate basis for ethnic attribution and the organization of transactions between Sámi and Norse groups. Only from the tenth century AD does this picture appear to change, when signs of a more deliberate symbolic articulation of Sámi ethnicity can be observed. This change is probably related to the fact that the relationship between ethnic groups changed in character and that new actors entered the scene (see chap. 3).

One factor that must be added to this picture is that the geo-cultural framework within which Sámi ethnicity—or northern Germanic ethnicity for that matter—came into being was not fortuitous. It is therefore likely that the patterns we see as having become fixed in the late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age in fact have older roots. In modern cultural research, the term ‘cultural area’ has long been regarded with justifiable skepticism. Still, we perhaps ought to consider the question of Sámi ethnicity on the basis of slightly different criteria than the present-day forms of reflexive awareness on which much of modern anthropological ethnicity theory is based. It is a fact that patterns of geographically expressed cultural differences were reproduced over very long periods of time in certain areas. The coast of Nordland and southern Troms County, together with the Norrland coast (possibly also Ostrobothnia and southwest Finland), show an affinity with the southern Scandinavian area from at least the Middle Neolithic that was reflected in exchange and later also in terms of economic orientation.⁴⁷ This pattern is not necessarily continuous; it appears to be more articulated in some periods than others. Even though the boundaries were by no means unambiguous or fixed, we can consider these areas as regions in which different cultural traditions were generated and which, at a given point in time, could be activated as a basis for more deliberately articulated identities. In this way, it can be maintained that Sámi ethnicity, as a consciously perceived and articulated identity, has older (latent) cultural

⁴⁷ Valen 2007.

“roots” in northern Fennoscandia than we have claimed here. At what point in time it is meaningful to label these patterns ‘Sámi,’ ‘Germanic’ (Norwegian/ Swedish) or ‘Finnish’ will thus depend on what we mean by these ethnic concepts.

Our position is that it may be meaningful to speak of Sámi ethnicity, at least as a retrospective category, from the end of the last millennium BC. Only then do we have documentation of hunting communities in interior, northern, and eastern Fennoscandia being involved in more extensive external interaction that may have caused the crucial ‘us-them’ awareness. The fact that, within this region at the same time, material expressions emerge that are distinct and uniform may be read as both an overt signaling of a common hunter identity and as a means that helped create it. During the same period, we also see the arrival of material forms of expression which are later perceived as central to Sámi culture: the special scree grave burial custom of wrapping the dead body in birch bark, and the characteristic division of floor space within the turf house. However, these features should be treated with caution: within the Sámi area in this early phase, they were confined to the northeastern coastal region, and they are also widely distributed, both before and after, in the circumpolar region.

2.7 ETHNICITY: PHYSICAL OR CULTURAL IDENTITY?

Whereas consolidation of the Nordic nation-states rendered the question of their origins and historical status more or less superfluous (i.e., Norway’s history was by definition Norwegian), the debate about Sámi rights led to renewed interest in the issue of the emergence of Sámi ethnicity and the history of the Sámi in general. It is therefore important to remind ourselves that the issues of ethnicity and origins are not ‘given’ questions, but that both the questions and their answers are influenced—if not determined—by the historical and socio-political context in which they are embedded. This reservation, of course, also applies to the cultural-historical model we have presented of how and why Sámi ethnicity came into being. It should also be emphasized that other cultural-historical models exist that may attach greater importance to links between archaeological and linguistic data.⁴⁸ We consider that ethnicity, and accordingly Sámi ethnicity, is a

⁴⁸ Carpelan 1981, 2001a.

form of cultural identity that is created and maintained through contacts with other groups. As we have shown, this is a relatively recent perspective in the interpretation of how peoples or ethnic groups come into being and how the boundaries between them are maintained. For a long time, race and ethnicity were perceived as almost equivalent terms, and ethnic differences were regarded as etched into the human body. Physical differences in physiognomy were therefore considered to be the key to charting the differences between ethnic groups and understanding their origins. Today, the physiological perception of ethnicity has lost its influence on cultural research in most parts of the world, a fact partly due to the discrediting of race theories witnessed since World War II.

In recent years, considerable attention has been paid to the potential of modern genetic technology for providing answers to questions about the origins of ethnic groups. Similarities in inherited genetic material (DNA) can reflect degrees of affinity, contact, and common origin, while differences may indicate isolation and historical distance. Several studies have presented data that show how the Sámi diverge genetically from other peoples in Europe as regards DNA transferred in the maternal lineage (mitochondrial DNA).⁴⁹ The contrasts appear to be so clear that there is even talk of a distinct 'Sámi motif' in the mitochondrial gene pool.⁵⁰ Antti Sajantila and his colleagues provide the following interpretation of this material:

The unique position of the Saami in the genetic landscape of Europe could mean that they are an old population in Europe, which diverged from other European populations prior to subsequent linguistic and cultural diversification. Alternatively, they may have come to Europe from another, currently unknown region.⁵¹

Genetic studies have, as a rule, been based on an assumed correlation between genetic and linguistic affinity.⁵² This assumption seems to form the basis of the empirical selection and interpretation of the results. However, this association does not apply to the Finns, which in turn also involves their relationship to the Sámi. Finnish and Sámi are both Finno-Ugric languages, and Finnish is the language most closely related to Sámi. However, studies of mitochondrial DNA show the Finns to be

⁴⁹ Sajantila et al. 1995; Lahermo et al. 1996.

⁵⁰ Zerjal et al. 2001, 1085.

⁵¹ Sajantila et al. 1995, 49.

⁵² Cavalli-Sforza et al. 1994.

closely related genetically not to the Sámi but to most of Europe's Indo-European-speaking populations. One explanation of this inconsistency is that around 4,000 years ago, an original Indo-European farming population in Finland experienced a massive decrease in population. The resulting minority population was subjected to linguistic (but not genetic) dominance by a Sámi- or Finno-Ugric-speaking hunting population, whose language they adopted; this explains why the Finns and the Sámi are linguistically but not genetically related.⁵³ From a cultural-historical point of view, this model does not seem particularly convincing, nor is there much archaeological evidence to support it. It also fails to explain how the Estonians and Volga-Finns, who also do not diverge from Europe's majority populations, acquired their Finno-Ugric languages, which are, of course, related to Sámi and Finnish.

Recent studies have shed new light on Sámi genetic heritage and in particular the question about their eastern or western affinity. As alternatively proposed by Sajantila et al., the Sámi's unique genetic position could well be seen as reflecting an alien, non-European origin, thus providing support for the old doctrine of their eastern roots.⁵⁴ In a comprehensive study undertaken by Tambets et al.,⁵⁵ DNA variants present in the Sámi were compared with those found in European and Siberian populations. This study, which also included paternally inherited Y-chromosomal variations, refuted an eastern origin and concludes that the Sámi's genetic profile is consistent with an old European ancestry:

It suggests that the large genetic separation of the Saami from other Europeans is best explained by assuming that the Saami are descendants of a narrow, distinctive subset of Europeans. In particular, no evidence of a significant directional gene flow from extant aboriginal Siberian populations into the haploid gene pools of the Saami was found.⁵⁶

Such application of modern gene technology opens up exciting prospects for historical research. In a study conducted by Max Ingman and Ulf Gyllensten, for example, a 'recent' genetic link between the Sámi and people of the Volga-Ural region of Russia dating to ca. 2700 BP has been suggested. At that time, they claim, some Sámi lineages must have shared a common ancestor with people from the Volga-Ural region.⁵⁷ This finding

⁵³ Sajantila et al., 1995, 359.

⁵⁴ Sajantila et al., 1995.

⁵⁵ Tambets et al., 2004.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 661.

⁵⁷ Ingman and Gyllensten, 2007.

is interesting because this is the region of the Ananjino culture and the dating of this link fits surprisingly well with the chronology of this culture. During the last millennium BC, representatives of this metal-producing culture interacted relatively extensively with northern hunting societies (see above and chap. 3). However, rather than seeing the proposed genetic link as a result of a migration,⁵⁸ it may be explained within the transactional framework applied here, suggesting that social and economic transactions also were strengthened by marriage alliances and kinship ties.

At the same time, there is reason to be skeptical of some of the far-reaching conclusions about origins and diffusion made on the basis of genetic data collected from contemporary populations. Little consideration has been given to the theoretical and methodological implications of using the results of genetic surveys to inform the study of social and cultural conditions in the distant past.⁵⁹ One considerable problem is how to estimate the timescale of the processes that may be read from modern gene distributions. Moreover, we must also question the relevance of distributions of ethnic and cultural relationships dating far back into the prehistoric period. Surveys frequently produce conflicting results and often offer the kinds of ad hoc explanations we have referred to above. Some researchers have also questioned whether Sámi mitochondrial DNA is truly deviant,⁶⁰ and how one can explain that this deviance is not reflected, or reflected less, in male genetic markers (distribution of Y-chromosomes).⁶¹ Critical questions can also be asked of sampling procedures: On what basis are individuals selected? Which Sámi groups do they represent? Are they concentrated in what are presumed to be 'genuine' Sámi areas? The questions are nearly endless. Far from rejecting gene technology as a relevant means of shedding light on ethnicity in the past, it nevertheless seems to be the case that selection and interpretation are still overly influenced by views of ethnic groups as biologically and culturally isolated. Hopefully, future research will bring together archaeology, history, linguistics, and genetic science in collaborative research projects, which may also include the use of ancient DNA.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ See Sims-Williams 1998.

⁶⁰ Villems et al. 1998.

⁶¹ Zerjal et al. 2001.

THE NAMING OF THE SÁMI

The naming of peoples and other social groups in an early historical period is an extremely complex field, with many methodological challenges. The difficulties do not simply arise from problems in interpreting the surviving sources, but also from the complexity of the naming process itself. The collective names of peoples have always been determined by diverse needs for classification, which vary according to the perspective of the name giver(s), the local context, the interaction from which the name-giving arises, and the character of the relationship between the groups (symmetrical or asymmetrical). The specific naming situation is often unknown to us, and this raises fundamental questions as to the kind of 'identity' these historical labels allude to and whether they can be conceived of as applying to distinct ethnic groups as we conceive of them today ('ethnonyms'), or whether it is a question of characteristics of special forms of lifestyle, or designations that emanate from special economic functions. Such specialized terms may also refer to social groups that have their own, subjectively-experienced identity, based on particular types of social and economic organization, without necessarily having to be perceived as expressions of separate ethnic identity. Later historical distinctions, for example between coastal Sámi, reindeer-herding Sámi, and the Sámi who settled in river valleys, are instructive. Alternatively, several ethnic groups, each with their own ethnic identity, may be merged into one and referred to by third parties using an 'umbrella label.' The Russians lumped together several different peoples who spoke Baltic and Finnish languages and referred to them collectively as *čud'* (*chudes*). In the case of ethnonyms in the narrower sense, we must therefore distinguish between the ethnic groups' own terms of reference to themselves (endonyms) and the labels and designations assigned by outsiders (exonyms). Designations assigned by outsiders may, in some instances, be correct translations of a group's own self-referential name (e.g., the term 'Sámi' in English), but they may also be applied because of special cultural or occupational traits regarded by the name-givers as distinctive. The challenge is to differentiate between the two categories as we move back in time and our overall grasp of the naming context becomes inadequate.

The picture is further complicated by the fact that such naming processes are dynamic and related to the development, maintenance, and possible spread of a generalized ethnic identity that may, in turn, be based on more restricted, regional identities. An in-group name, based on regional, local forms of lifestyle, or on a separate, locally-anchored identity, may diffuse and become generalized through a process of standardization and thus end up encompassing several groups that previously appeared to be different. In this case, both the ethnic groups' own choice and the way these groups are perceived by their interaction partners can play a role. Secondly, a term that was originally an exonym may be adopted by a group and become a self-designation. Designations that are relatively imprecise to begin with and which characterize typical features of lifestyle or economic function may thus gradually assume a more distinct ethnic content. One general problem of interpreting the sources is that names from earlier periods that have been passed down to us have largely been preserved in

versions produced by representatives of literate cultures, i.e., scribes within the developing state and ecclesiastical organizations of the Middle Ages. In other words, what we have is largely the view of administrators; their texts provide a classification and categorization of human groups that was meaningful for them, given their position in their own cultures, within which they used the ethnographic terms familiar to them: 'tribes,' 'peoples' and 'nations.'

With these provisos in mind, we shall present some more recent views on the history of the terms that have been used to refer to the Sámi.

1) Sámi Names for Themselves

There appears to be a consensus of opinion in Finno-Ugric linguistics that both the Sámi term of self-reference *sámi*/ *sápmi*/ *sápmelaš* and the old designation of the Finnish grouping *hämäläiset* go back to an original form, *šāmā*, which is believed to have existed in the common Sámi-Finnic language. The term *šāmā* is also related to the Baltic word *žēme*, *zeme*, meaning 'country', which has the same origin as the equivalent Russian word *zemlya*.

2) Designations of the Sámi by Others (Exonyms)

2a) *Finns/skridfinns* (*Finns/skiing Finns*)

The Sámi's endonym appears once in Norse sources, in the form *semsveinar* in the Icelandic *Vatnsdæla Saga*. Otherwise, the normal Old Norse designation (exonym) for the Sámi was *Finn*, which recurs throughout Norse literature. The etymology of this name is generally sought in the same Germanic root as the verb 'to find', *finden*, etc. in modern Germanic languages. In Old High German, there is a noun *fendo*, which means 'walker'. As a designation for the Sámi, the term probably had its origins in the neighboring Norse peoples' perception of the typical Sámi nomadic lifestyle and social/ economic structure. It has therefore been assumed that the original semantic content on the Nordic side was 'wanderer/ nomad' or 'tracker/ hunter'.

Tracing the roots of the term *finn(e)* is, however, complicated by the fact that in the Scandinavian languages, there is a partial coincidence between the term used for the Sámi and the designation alluding to the later Finns, in the sense of *Finlanders*. In *Saint Ólaf's Saga*, Snorri Sturluson refers to the poems of Sigvat Skald, in which the term *Finnlander* is used for the inhabitants of Finland. Finland is actually mentioned in *Njáls Saga*, which was written in the late thirteenth century. There is every reason to believe that the partial overlap in meaning is no coincidence. Ancient writers like Tacitus (AD 98) and Ptolemy (first century AD) used 'Finn' in the Latinized form *fenni* and Hellenized as *Φίννοι/ finnoi*, respectively. Here the allusion is to hunters whose way of life is portrayed as contrasting starkly with European agricultural peoples, in particular the culture that epitomized civilization in their eyes, the Greek and Roman traditions of the Mediterranean. Moreover, Tacitus also used his portrayal of foreign peoples for a subtle cultural critique of what he saw as decadent, repulsive aspects of this Mediterranean culture. He describes the Fenni as hunters and trappers who had no horses, permanent homes, or arms, although they did have hunting weapons, including bone-tipped arrows. This people lived in turf huts or tents, dressed in skins, and depended on the animals they killed.

Based on comparisons with the Sámi culture as known from later periods, Tacitus' and Ptolemy's descriptions have traditionally been interpreted as referring to the Sámi. However, recent research makes it more likely that they were referring to the heterogeneous hunter-gatherer inhabitants of southern Finland who were the predecessors of both the Sámi and the Finlanders. This interpretation is supported by the fact that sixth-century European authors began to use another term alongside *fenni/finnoi*, referring to this people as *skriðfinner* or 'skiing finns', which are given various Latin and Greek renderings:

skritiphinoi (Prokopios, died in 560/580 AD)

Scerefennae, crefennae and *rerefennae* (Jordanes, sixth century AD)

scirdifini, sirdifeni, serdifenni, rerefeni (The anonymous geographer of Ravenna, eighth century AD)

scridowinni, scritobini, scritofinni (Paulus Warnefried Diaconus, ca. 725–795 AD)

The term is also found in the works of Adam of Bremen (ca. 1070 AD) and Saxo Grammaticus (ca. 1200 AD).

The expression *skriðfinner* must have come from Norse. In Norse, *skriða á skiðum* is a standard phrase meaning 'to ski', and skiing seems to be included as an element in Norse people's ethnic stereotyping of the Sámi. An Icelandic oath formula (*Grágás; Grettis Saga*), for example, says that revenge shall befall the one who breaks the agreement just as surely as the sun shines, as the shield sparkles, falcons fly, and Sámi ski (*finnr skriðr*). By the European authors, this term is closely associated with their descriptions of the trappers' way of life, with an emphasis on mobile dwellings, different kinds of gender roles, and special hunting techniques and means of getting about, first and foremost through the use of skis. *Skriðfinner* appears to have developed from a designation based on conspicuous aspects of the way of life of those Finns who continued hunting and trapping. In this way they could be contrasted with the 'other' Finns.

2b) *Lapps*

This exonym appears to have first been used by Russians in the form *lop'* in chronicles from about the year AD 1000.^a The Russian designation was later established as *lopar'*. In Norse sources, the earliest written evidence is in Saxo Grammaticus' *Gesta Danorum* (The Deeds of the Danes) from ca. 1200. Here it appears in a description of the land, referring to two types of Lappland (*utraque Lappia* meaning 'both Lapplands'). As mentioned above, Saxo also uses *skriðfinner* (*skriðfinni*), and he describes, for example, this people's unusual ability to move about and hunt in snow-covered landscapes.

The first reference in a Norse context is in the brief anecdote (*tått*) *Fundinn Noregr* (The Foundation of Norway), which is included as the introduction to *Orkneyinga-saga* (ca. 1230). It relates how the men called Lapps lived at the head of the fjord, and that this was "beyond Finnmark" (*fyrir innan Finnmark*):

^a Uibopuu 1988, 115.

After that, he travelled from Kvenland and beyond the end of the sea and arrived there, where those men were who are called Lapps; that is, beyond Finnmark.

Eptir þat fór hann af Kvenlandi og fyrir innan hafsbótinn ok kómu þar, er þeir menn væru, er Lappir heita; þat er á bak Finnmark.

The designation ‘Lapp’ seems to appear from the beginning in an eastern context and is placed, from a Norse point of view, relative to the land around the head of the Gulf of Bothnia, in connection with Kvenland and apparently *beyond* (east of?) Finnmark. In historical times as well, this term appears to have been used primarily by those on the Finnish and Swedish sides; it does not seem to have been borrowed into Norwegian until much later. The earliest Swedish evidence of a people by this name is in the *Tälje-stadgan* of 1328, when the Swedish crown was seeking to settle conflicts of interest between the Hälsings and the Birkarls who were granted the right to trade with the Sámi. The ‘Lapps’ are defined in this text as “nomadic forest people who in the popular idiom are known as the Lapps,” and it was emphasized that no one should hinder them in their hunt. In 1275, however, ‘Lappie’ appears in a papal letter to the Archbishop of Uppsala, although here it used to designate a region that was part of Ingermanland, and later called ‘Loppis.’^b

In modern Scandinavian languages, the term ‘lap(p)’ basically means “a small piece or strip of fabric or hide.” The semantic content is therefore close to the Balto-Finnic expression for a ‘wedge’ or a ‘triangular piece of fabric inserted as a wedge in another piece of clothing’. This term is discussed in other chapters in connection with trading relationships between groups in Baltic Finland, e.g. in the Finnish form *vuojalainen* and Sámi *wuöwjie/ vuovjjuš* or *vuovza*.^c In earlier periods, this term appears to have referred to several Baltic Finnish peoples, and might be the origin of the some of the endonyms used by these ethnic groups. With a point of departure in the original, literal meaning, the term could have acquired a figurative meaning as a term for groups of fishermen, hunters and trappers. As a self-referential designation of a people *vuovjjuš* is also found in North Sámi in 1742.^d

The most plausible explanation to date of the origin of the term *lapp/ lappalainen* is, therefore, that it is a translated loanword based on one or more similar terms that were current during the Viking Era in the multicultural, multilingual communities that emerged in and around the early urban centers in the east. These were inhabited by Slavic-speaking, Balto-Finnic-speaking, and Norse-speaking groups. Staraja Ladoga (the Vikings’ *Aldeigjuborg*) is one possible location.^e

^b Haltsonen 1962.

^c See Chapter 3.

^d Ganander 1743, 28.

^e Uibopuu 1988, 115; Stang 1981, 161–167.

CHAPTER THREE

ECONOMIC SPECIALIZATION AND ETHNIC CONSOLIDATION: NORTHERN HUNTING SOCIETIES IN THE IRON AGE AND EARLY MIDDLE AGES

3.1 BACKGROUND

In the last two millennia BC, important changes in social structure, settlement and economy took place among the hunting societies in northern Fennoscandia. Extensive systems of exchange brought the hunter-gatherer communities in the north increasingly into contact with products and traders from distant societies to both the east and the south. Particularly decisive was the expansion in the last millennium BC: contacts with the outside world intensified and became structured according to more fixed geographical patterns.

Apart from the northernmost hunting societies, the communities along the coasts of northern Sweden and northern Norway increasingly oriented themselves toward southern Scandinavia. At the same time, they began to supplement their foraging livelihood with farming.¹ These changes may not necessarily have occurred for purely nutritional reasons; the introduction of farming was perhaps more culturally and ideologically motivated.² For example, grain could have been grown to brew beer for use at ritual and social occasions.³ However, recent studies suggest that farming also may have played a significant economic role in some northern coastal societies, especially during the last millennium BC.⁴

At the same time, the hunting societies in the inner and northeastern parts of northern Fennoscandia became increasingly involved in long-distance exchange with metal-producing societies as far away as central and eastern Russia.⁵ Changes in settlement and economy also occurred

¹ Baudou 1982; Engelmark and Wallin 1985; Johansen and Vorren 1986; Johansen 1990; Myhre 2002; Valen 2007; Arntzen and Sommerseth 2010.

² Olsen 1988.

³ See for example, Prescott 1996; Taavitsainen et al. 1998, 240; Storli 2006, 24.

⁴ Arntzen and Sommerseth 2009.

⁵ Bakka 1976; Huurre 1986.

among these communities, but still within the framework of a hunting livelihood. While parts of the settlement in the northern coastal areas (especially in Finnmark and on Kola) may have been almost sedentary at the end of the Late Stone Age, increasing mobility can be observed throughout the Early Metal Age (1800 BC–AD 0) with seasonal movements between coastal and inland areas. Terrestrial resources were emphasized to a greater degree, and the number of settlement and hunting sites in the interior increased. This growing interest in the interior and its resources may have been connected with the role that furs played in the exchange with the eastern, metal-producing societies. The fact that habitation sites in the interior contain many arrowheads and hide scrapers supports such a hypothesis.⁶

The Early Metal Age thus seems to have led to a decisive differentiation of the northern cultural landscape. While the communities along the southern parts of the coast of northern Norway and the Gulf of Bothnia stressed agriculture to an increasing degree and culturally oriented themselves southward, the people in the inner and northeastern areas continued their hunting economy in spite of certain changes and became increasingly involved in eastern exchange networks. Much suggests that during the latter part of this period, this differentiation culminated in the formation of different cultural identities and thus served as a basis for the dual ethnic and cultural context that later came to characterize the region.

Features of the archaeological record, and especially the different pottery styles, seem to support this interpretation. Around 2000 BC, a special type of pottery had come into use among the hunter-gatherers in the north, in which the clay was mixed with asbestos fiber. In the course of the second millennium BC, the northern hunting communities gave this pottery a relatively homogeneous shape by decorating the surface with textile-like impressions. Stylistic variation did occur, but seems confined to certain areas. Around 1000 BC, however, asbestos pottery differentiated into two geographically complementary styles: Risvik pottery along the northwest coast of Norway (as far north as northern Troms County) and Kjelmøy pottery in inner and northeast Fennoscandia.⁷ Kjelmøy pottery is bucket-shaped, thin-walled, and richly decorated in a style that seems to borrow features from eastern trading partners (see fig. 4). Risvik pottery stands out as being very different, as it is bowl-shaped, thick-walled, and normally unornamented (see fig. 5).

⁶ Forsberg 1985; Hood and Olsen 1988; Olsen 1994; Bergman 1995.

⁷ Munch 1962; Jørgensen and Olsen 1988; Andreassen 2002.

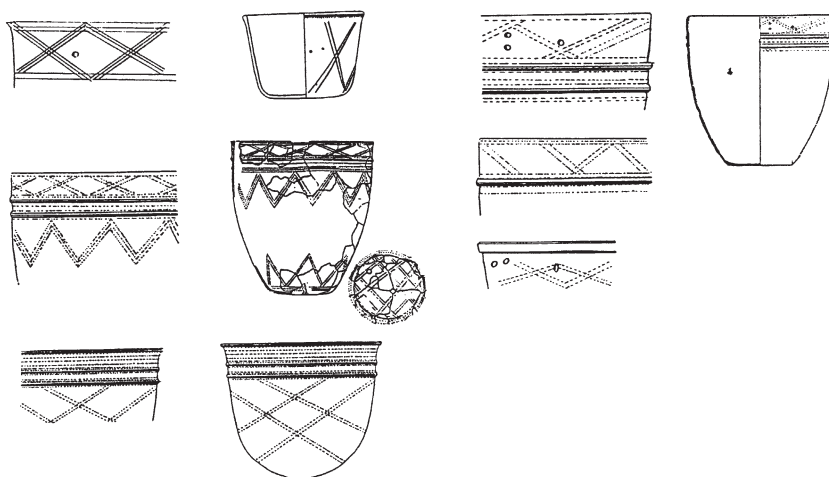


Fig. 4. Asbestos pottery of Kjelmøy type from Ångermanland and southern Lappland. (Sketch from Hulthén 1991.) The ornamentation on the Kjelmøy pottery (zigzag pattern and parallel horizontal lines) has clear resemblances to the ornamentation on the Ananjino axes of bronze that were produced in Eastern Russia. These axes together with various products of iron were important goods in the exchange with the hunting population in the north. The transfer of a stylistic feature from the axes to the pottery might represent a desire to signal both a connection to and difference from the eastern trading partners. The situation that the Kjelmøy pottery ceases at the same time as the relationships to the east cease in the first centuries AD might indicate that it played an essential role as symbolic medium in this interaction.

Risvik pottery is found only in Norway; similar differentiation of the pottery cannot be detected further east in Fennoscandia. Also in this area, however, there is archaeological evidence that suggests a cultural differentiation. Along the Norrland coast up to Piteå and along the Finnish Gulf of Bothnia coast, there are thousands of burial cairns that show a clear affinity with southern Scandinavian burial customs.⁸ In Sweden, most of these 'coastal cairns' seem to date from the period 1200–700 BC, but later datings are known from Finland as well as from Sweden.⁹ In addition, along the coast of Nordland and Troms there are burial cairns with southern forms. Although the dating of these cairns still is uncertain, a

⁸ Baudou 1988, 12; Edgren and Törnblom 1993, 118–119.

⁹ Baudou 1992, 100–103; Kotivuori 1992; Miettinen 1994, 10–11.

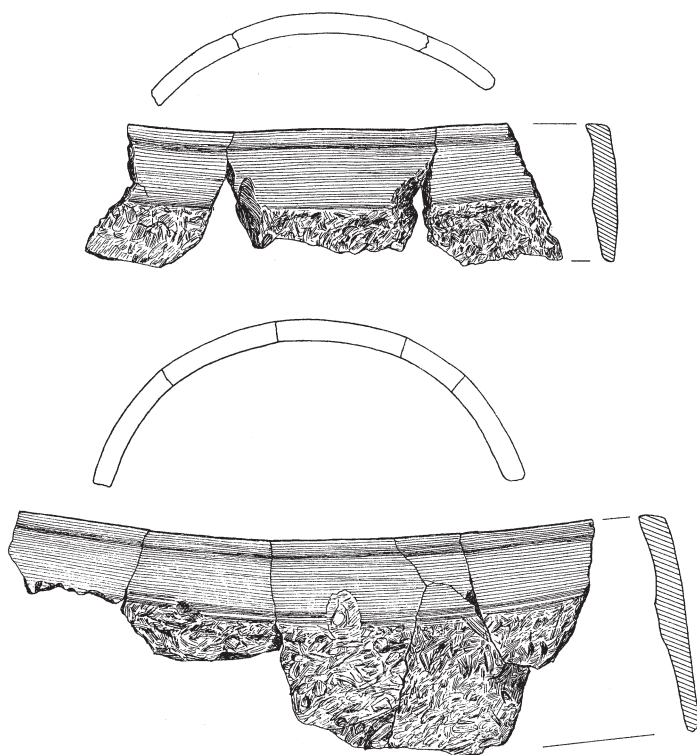


Fig. 5. Rim shard from Risvik pottery from Teksmøna, Meløy municipality, Nordland (sketch from Munch 1962).

significant number of them may be from the Metal Age.¹⁰ Very few of the northern Norwegian graves have been investigated, but they have yielded a few southern Scandinavian bronze objects, and in one grave, they were found in combination with Risvik pottery.¹¹ Burial cairns of this type are confined to the coastal zone and are not found in the interior.¹² Along the coast of northern Norway and Norrland, there are also a few hoards with southern Scandinavian artifacts, and both these 'depots' and some of the motif selections on the latest rock art along the coast of northern Norway strongly suggest southern contact and cultural influence.¹³

¹⁰ Munch 1967; Moltu 1988, 75–76; Jørgensen 1989; Arntzen and Sommerseth 2010.

¹¹ Bakka 1976.

¹² Baudou 1988, 12.

¹³ Bergum 2007.

In northern Sweden, the delimitation seems more diffuse, in that Kjelmøy pottery is also found in the same area as the burial cairns along the coast, yet not in the graves themselves.¹⁴ The burial cairns, however, appear only on the coast, while Kjelmøy pottery is primarily found further inland. The existence of different ethnic groups, though, need not manifest itself in clearly delimited territories. As many anthropological and historical studies have shown, the same landscape can accommodate several ethnic groups that utilize different ecological niches or complement each other socially and/or economically. The fact that hunting societies exploited the coastal areas seasonally is not inconsistent with this area also being settled by groups that increasingly emphasized agriculture, and that maintained cultural and economic contacts with southern Scandinavia.

In the millennium before our era, hunting societies in the inner and northeastern parts of northern Fennoscandia had become involved in long-distance economic contacts with metal-producing agricultural societies in eastern and central Russia. Metal, both bronze and more significantly iron, was introduced to these communities probably in exchange for furs and other hunting products. The settlement pattern is characterized by a relatively high degree of mobility and an increased utilization of terrestrial resources—a reorganization that may partly be due to the increased importance of fur exchange. Along the coast of northwest Norway and parts of the Gulf of Bothnia, the situation is different: here communities were increasingly oriented toward southern Scandinavia. These people had integrated agriculture into their economy to varying degrees and, moreover, they signaled their 'southern' affiliation through Risvik pottery (Norway) and burial cairns. These communities were probably also characterized by increasing social hierarchization.

As mentioned previously, the borders between these two traditions are of course not absolute; overlapping and 'hybrid' features occur to varying degrees. All the same, they form a rough pattern that would still have effects in later historical periods. In the previous chapter, we tied this differentiation in the last millennium BC to the emergence of Sámi ethnicity, and we believe that this differentiation established many of the preconditions for the ethnic dualism that later came to characterize the situation in northern Fennoscandia. In this chapter, we are going to look closer at development in the Sámi areas through the Iron Age and the Early

¹⁴ Bolin 1999.

Middle Ages. We will try to capture some of the regional variation that characterized the hunter-gatherer communities and their relations with surrounding ethnic groups.

3.2 THE BEGINNING OF THE IRON AGE: CONSOLIDATION AND CHANGE

In the last four to five centuries BC, agriculture took on greater economic significance in northern Fennoscandia. This is evident from studies of the history of vegetation that indicate increased grain cultivation and grazing.¹⁵ Around the beginning of our era, then, it is assumed that farming, probably based on a combination of agriculture, husbandry, fishing, and hunting, was established along the coast of Nordland and southern Troms, in southwest Finland, and along the coast of Norrland up to Ångermanland.¹⁶ This development created a social and economic environment that both displayed great contrast to the remaining hunting communities and a significant similarity with the southern Scandinavian communities. For example, the end of the use of Risvik pottery around 400 BC may be explained by the fact that the socioeconomic form of these communities was sufficient to express their cultural affiliation, and that additional material signaling was superfluous.¹⁷

In the last centuries BC, the farming economy expanded.¹⁸ Further processes of social stratification in the Late Roman Age and the migration period (AD 200–600) resulted in hierarchically-organized chieftaincies becoming the dominant form of society in coastal communities up to southern Troms and central Norrland. Traces of these settlements appear in the form of farm structures with longhouses, boathouses, and burial mounds. Much of the material culture, in the form of weapons, tools, and ornaments, is very similar to what we find further south in Scandinavia and elsewhere in northwest Europe. Linguistically and ethnically, this coastal settlement during the Late Roman Age and the migration period represents the northernmost offshoots of Germanic culture.¹⁹

¹⁵ Baudou 1982; Engelmark and Wallin 1985; Johansen 1990; Myhre 2002; Valen 2007; Arntzen and Sommersth 2010.

¹⁶ Johansen 1990; Donner 1984; Meinander 1984; Liedgren 1988.

¹⁷ Jørgensen and Olsen 1988, 79; Andreassen 2002.

¹⁸ Arntzen and Sommersth 2010.

¹⁹ Johansen 1990; Ramqvist 1988; Solberg 2000; Storli 2006.

A similar consolidation of agricultural society seems to have occurred in portions of southern and western Finland. These agricultural communities were probably composed of an early Finnish-speaking population that was different both from the hunting communities in the woodland areas to the north and east and from the Germanic communities to the west. Burial customs, ornaments, and pottery are of eastern Baltic and local Finnish origin, while similarities with the northwestern European Germanic area are mainly seen in weapons and individual ornament forms. The latter probably attests to widespread contacts and alliances within the elite sphere in large portions of northern Europe at this time.²⁰

While the newly established farming communities along the coast consolidated their 'southern' identity through a more pronounced integration with northwest European society in the first centuries AD, the situation changed radically for northern hunting communities. The close contacts that had been established with the chieftaincies and petty kingdoms along the Volga and Kama in the last millennium BC were terminated or substantially reduced in the first centuries AD.²¹ An indication that this contact collapsed is the cessation of material forms that most likely had an important communicative function in these interactions, such as the Kjelmøy pottery.²² Among the hunter-gatherers in the inner and northeastern parts of Fennoscandia, Kjelmøy pottery is used as late as ca. AD 300. However, it became increasingly rare and it is interesting to note that the latest finds of this pottery in the Varanger area are from ritual contexts in the form of scree burials²³ as well as a possible sacrificial find.²⁴ Earlier, the pottery is primarily known from habitation sites. This possible change from dwelling context to burial context could be connected with the pottery having primarily attained an internal, ritual significance in the last phase, and, to a lesser degree, being related to household use and a public context of interaction.

The period from around AD 200–900 has been described as remarkably poor in regard to archaeological finds in the Sámi settlement area.²⁵ For example, it has proven difficult to identify locally produced artifact

²⁰ Schauman-Lönnqvist 1992, 1999; Pihlman 1995.

²¹ Carpelan 1979, 11; 1984, 105.

²² Olsen 1984, 216–218.

²³ A. Schanche 2000.

²⁴ K. Schanche 1994.

²⁵ Huurre 1983; Olsen 1984; Storli 1986; Baudou 1988; Schanche 1992.

types from this period that are chronologically characteristic of the northern hunting population.²⁶ More recent archaeological investigations have modified this picture considerably, but at the same time confirmed a certain ‘anonymity’ in the archaeological material.²⁷ Much suggests that the material culture in this period lacked the kind of distinct common features that it had in the periods before and after. Significant regional variation also seems to have occurred and, to a certain degree, to have been caused by integration and contact with surrounding communities.

Before examining the different processes within the Sámi area during the Iron Age and the Early Middle Ages, we shall take a look at the neighboring societies, mainly the Germanic chieftaincies in northern Scandinavia, and consider the nature of their contacts with the Sámi.

3.3 GERMANIC PEOPLES AND SÁMI IN THE NORTH

Previously, it was common to view both the emergence of farming and Germanic cultural identity as a result of immigration. Germanic/Norwegian groups from southwest Norway migrated to the northern areas where they appropriated the coastal zone most suitable for farming.²⁸ Similarly, Finnish-speaking farmers from Estonia migrated into southern Finland and established themselves as rulers there. As we have mentioned earlier, there is little to support this ‘colonialist’ model.²⁹ Already in the Bronze Age (and to a certain degree in the middle and late Neolithic Ages), the northern coastal communities show a southern affinity in material culture and economy.³⁰ What took place, however, was a process of ‘Germanization’ within the northern coastal farming societies.

Decisive in the ‘final’ identity choice of these societies was probably the fact that increasing social stratification had led to the formation of chieftaincies in the first centuries AD.³¹ Consolidation of the chieftaincies was dependent on alliances with comparable societies and access to status goods that could legitimate the chieftains’ power. These were to be found in the south, and, as mentioned above, the ‘entry ticket’ to these alliance networks may well have been the adoption

²⁶ Huurre 1983; Baudou 1988, 15.

²⁷ Henriksen 1996; Hesjedal et al. 1996; Olsen, Urbanzyk and Amundsen 2011.

²⁸ Gjessing 1929, 1931, 1973; Sjøvold 1962, 215–240.

²⁹ See Gjessing 1973.

³⁰ See Baudou 1988, 12–13; Ramqvist 1988, 106; Bergum 2007; Valen 2007.

³¹ Odner 1983; Ramqvist 1988, 107, 112–113.

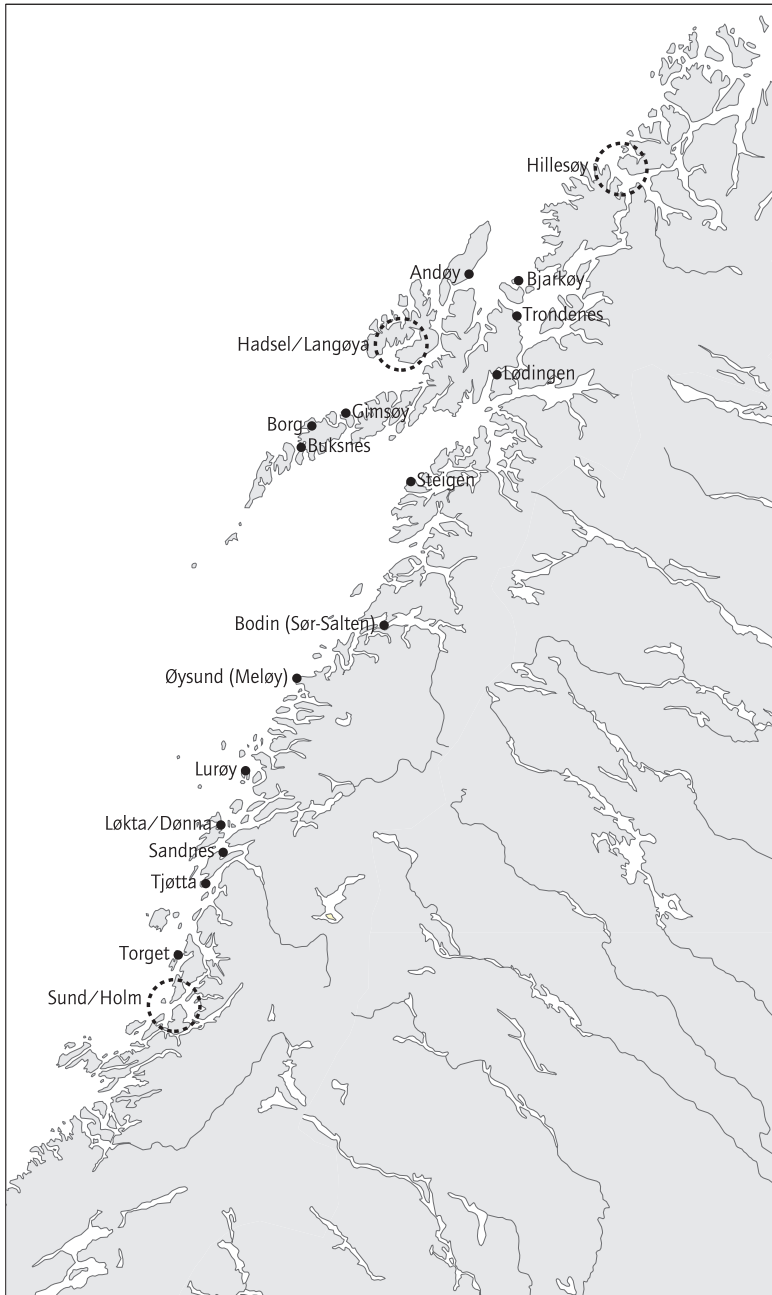


Fig. 6. Chieftaincies/centre formations in northern Norway in the Late Iron Age (after Storli 1985, Berglund 1995 and Hansen 1999).

of Germanic identity.³² The exchange of marriage partners may have facilitated and strengthened linguistic and cultural harmonization. These communities were isolated, small, and vulnerable, and alliances created through the exchange of goods and intermarriage was decisive for assuring a more or less equal balance of power. These groups were also on guard against circumstances that could upset this balance, by striving for the same goods as culturally- and socially-related neighboring communities. Cultural features adopted by one community therefore spread rapidly and contributed to relatively homogeneous forms of cultural manifestations within the Germanic sphere.³³

Participation in these exchange networks, however, also requires having products to contribute. The greatest asset the northern chieftains possessed were the exotic hunting products they could supply to their southern alliance partners. Hunting products like walrus teeth, precious furs, and probably hunting falcons were luxury goods coveted by the European elite, in addition to more staple but important goods such as eider down, ship ropes, blubber oil, and common furs and skins. These goods were supplied by the Sámi hunting communities and transactions between the two ethnic groups were accordingly of great significance for the northern chieftaincies.

3.3.1 *Exploitation or Cooperation?*

How these transactions were organized has been debated within historical and archaeological research. In accordance with the 'colonialist' model, one prevailing view was that the Sámi were taxed and grossly exploited by the militarily superior Germanic chieftains.³⁴ Support for this position has been drawn from a few individual statements in Icelandic saga texts and Ohthere's account, where taxation of the Sámi is mentioned. Gradually, an alternative position has developed that to a large degree stresses cooperation and that the contact was of mutual benefit to the two parties involved.³⁵ This, of course, does not preclude an asymmetrical relation of power due to the Germanic/Norse chieftains having military superiority that could be mustered in certain contexts. For example, they could have appropriated and dispelled the Sámi from those areas that

³² Odner 1983; see chapter 2.

³³ See Renfrew 1986; Schanche 1986.

³⁴ Gjessing 1973; see also Sjøvold 1962, 227.

³⁵ Odner 1983; see also Carpelan 1984, 105; Taavitsainen 1988, 215, 229.

were best suited for agriculture. To what degree such land conflicts actually arose is, however, uncertain. Since the Sámi's mode of production was focused on hunting and trapping, areas that were suited for cultivation would not necessarily have been especially valuable to them. It is even more uncertain whether such military superiority could be used to exploit the Sámi on their own land. In *The Saga of Egil Skallagrímsson*, a trade and tax collecting journey into the interior region of southern Nordland County (Vefsn/Rana) is depicted. The text mentions the chieftain Thorolf Kveldulfsson who had residences on the farms Torgar at Brønnøy and Sandnes at Vefsn:

In the winter, Thorolf went out on a journey to the mountains and had a large crew with him, not fewer than ninety men. Before, it had been the custom that district governors had had only thirty men, sometimes fewer too. Thorolf took along many goods for trading. He soon set up a meeting with the Finns and collected tax from them and did trade with them. Everything went in peace and friendship between them, but sometimes he put a scare into them. Thorolf traveled widely about in Finnmark.³⁶

The large crew and Thorolf's ability to frighten the Sámi could be cited in support of military superiority being used to exploit and oppress the Sámi (in spite of the simultaneous emphasis on peace and friendship). Thorolf was Egil Skallagrímsson's uncle, and is supposed to have lived at the same time as Harald Fairhair (Harald Hårfagre). The saga, which is assumed to have been written some time in the first decades of the thirteenth century, purports to describe events some 250 years earlier. The narrative also contains obvious anachronistic features, such as the reference to *syselmennene* (district governors)—a system that was not introduced until the end of the twelfth century—and information that Thorolf had been commissioned by the king with the trading and taxation journey to the Sámi (the *finneferd*). Royal ambitions to obtain sole rights to the fur trade with the Sámi cannot be traced back further than the middle of the eleventh century, and at the earliest to the time of Olav Haraldsson.

Knut Odner also suggested that the rare statements about plunder and harsh conduct that actually occur in the sagas must be understood in the Norse context in which they were presented.³⁷ This was a context in which courage, strength, and combat were esteemed, and the function

³⁶ *Egilssoga* 1978. 8. utg., omsett av Leiv Heggstad, revidert av Magne Heggstad. Norrøne bokverk 15, Oslo, 1978; authors' translation.

³⁷ Odner 1983.

of the stories was more to impress as tales of a warrior culture than to reflect real inter-ethnic conditions. He argues that using military force against a mobile population of hunter-gatherers with detailed knowledge of the terrain was not at all a suitable strategy. If the Sámi were exploited and plundered repeatedly, they would, of course, do everything to avoid such contact. Cooperation and mutually binding agreements about the exchange of products would be a far better way to assure stable and reliable deliveries. Neither should one underestimate the potential power of the Sámi themselves in this relationship, in that they possessed significant economic and symbolic capital. This was the case for the products they delivered, which the Norwegian social elite was probably dependent on, as well as for their ritual and magic abilities which the Norse people held in high esteem.

It is also significant that the sagas refer to the Sámi with respect and emphasize cooperation and close relations between Norse chieftains and Sámi. Not least, the Sámi's magical skills are stressed, and much suggests that they acted as healers, advisors, and teachers of magic and sorcery. That fact that early Christian laws from eastern Norway, those of the provincial assemblies of Borgarthing and Eidsivathing, explicitly prohibit going to the Sámi for prophecy and against "believing in" the Sámi etc., must be cited in support for the idea that this was a normal practice in the pre-Christian era.³⁸ Much suggests that the Sámi and the Norse populations shared certain fundamental religious conceptions,³⁹ which, in a pre-Christian context, may have been the basis of greater mutual understanding and respect than what later became the case. In an example of this, and of the close cooperation between Norse chieftains and the Sámi, the *Saga of Olaf Tryggvason* says about the chieftain Raud from Salten:

There was a farmer by the name of Raud the Strong: he lived at Godøy in the fjord named Salten. Raud was wealthy and kept many retainers: he was powerful, a large number of Finns came to his aid as soon as he needed it. Raud was an eager sacrificer and a great sorcerer.⁴⁰

Although much suggests that the Sámi shaman was considered as more capable and more powerful than Norse sorcerers or *seid* women,⁴¹ there

³⁸ Mundal 1996, 102–103.

³⁹ Mundal 1996, Drobin and Keinänen 2001; Solli 2002.

⁴⁰ *Norges kongesagaer* (The Sagas of the kings of Norway) 1979, 1180; authors' translation; cf. Snorri Sturlusson: *Heimskringla*, transl. by Lee M. Hollander 205, 212.

⁴¹ *Seid* means 'sorcery.' Some of the Scandinavian sorcerers and *seid* women are mentioned in the sagas as children of grandchildren of Sámi (Zachrisson 1997, 172).

are obvious similarities between them, such as being able to carry out soul journeys during trances, having animal spirits, prophesying, and being able to cause bad weather.⁴² Both with the Sámi and with the Norwegian population, we likewise find conceptions about magical weapons and clothing.⁴³ The Norwegian pagan faith, and not least the Odin cult, has clear shamanistic features.⁴⁴ All these features must have created entirely different conditions for interacting with the Sámi than was the case after the introduction of Christianity. In this respect, the Sámi and the (North) Norwegian chieftains had a common interest in fighting against the new religion. It is also interesting then to notice that the (North) Norwegian chieftains who fought against the introduction of Christianity used the Sámi's magic capabilities, and that Sámi are claimed to have fought on the pagan side.⁴⁵

The relationship to Sámi magic is, to be sure, ambiguous: on the one hand, Norwegian chieftains had an advantage of getting arrows whittled and jackets sewn by the Sámi, something that contributed to invulnerability in battle. Moreover, Sámi sorcery could well be included as protection and in connection with healing. On the other hand, the Sámi were sometimes considered as dangerous sorcerers. This contrast between Norwegian and Sámi sorcery, however, could equally be due to the Christian saga authors' ambiguous relationship to sorcery and their own heathen past. Although they very much wanted to present this past as glorious, in light of their Christian position they were forced to disassociate themselves from clear examples of pagan practice.⁴⁶

At the same time, the sagas contain a number of accounts that suggest that contact with the Sámi and Sámi magic was understood as an important legitimizing aspect of the exercise of power with the Norwegian elite. Typical is the account in *Heimskringla* about how Eric Bloodaxe is supposed to have met Gunnhild who became his queen, when Eric, on the way back from a Bjarmeland journey, stopped in Finnmark. In a turf hut there, he ran into Gunnhild, who is said to be the daughter of a Hålogaland chieftain, Ossur Tote or Lauvskjegg. To the question of what she was doing there, she answered, "I've been here to learn sorcery from two Finns, the wisest here in Finnmark." Even if most historians today

⁴² Solli 2002.

⁴³ Mundal 1996, 112.

⁴⁴ Hedeager 1997, 100–118; Solli 2002.

⁴⁵ Mundal 1996, 104.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 113.

assume that Gunnhild was really the daughter of Danish King Gorm the Old, as claimed in *Historia Norvegiæ*, Snorri Sturluson's use of the account illustrates that it was natural to postulate close connections between Sámi knowledgeable in sorcery and the Norwegian elite in the pagan period. It is also said that in some situations, Olav Tryggvason consulted with Sámi *noaidis* or shamans.⁴⁷ The sagas likewise mention marriages between Norwegian chieftains or kings and Sámi women of high birth (in one case also between a Sámi man and a Norwegian woman). The best known is *Ágrip's* and *Heimskringla's* account of the marriage between Harald Fairhair and the Sámi woman Snøfrid. As several have pointed out,⁴⁸ these tales are probably later mythological constructions that are supposed to assure economic and political integration in the kingdom and show the Sámi's obligations to the king (in terms of kinship). That such constructions, which involve persons in the highest echelons of Norse society, are considered possible at all, nevertheless suggests a significant degree of social acceptance of the Sámi.⁴⁹

Thus, there is reason to assume that the relationship between the Sámi and the Norse Iron Age communities was more symbiotic and more marked by cooperation than has been previously thought. Much also suggests that the Norse/Germanic culture's religion and socio-political organization made such a cooperation easier than what would later be the case. For example, the Sámi could have fulfilled specialist functions within the economic system on which the Norse Iron Age communities were based. As Knut Odner has pointed out, the Sámi could have even found this favorable, because it was an arrangement that made it possible for them to maintain their hunting economy and their social and cultural arrangements adaptation.⁵⁰ In contrast to the dominant model, in which the Sámi's confrontation with other societies has often been seen within the framework of exploitation and cultural decline, he claims that it was because of—and not in spite of—the contact with external communities that the Sámi preserved their specialized hunting adaptation and their social and cultural form for such a long time.

⁴⁷ Zachrisson 1997, 167.

⁴⁸ Odner 1983; Mundal 1996; see also Steinsland 1991.

⁴⁹ Mundal 1996, 111.

⁵⁰ Odner 1983.

3.3.2 *Sami Hunting and a 'Redistributive' Economy*

The Germanic/Norse chieftaincies probably functioned more or less as so-called 'redistributive systems.'⁵¹ In such systems, resources and surplus production are channeled into a social (religious, political) center that retains some of the goods and redistributes the rest among the members according to certain rules. A chieftain held the responsibility for the management of the center, a person with higher social status who also had political and religious leadership functions in the local community. Such a system generates a certain division of labor, so that those who are attached to the chieftaincy do not have to produce everything they need for their own subsistence, but can specialize their production toward certain resources. The chieftain who receives the products can then distribute them again in various ways, for example, through feasts or gift exchange. The distribution serves to confirm and maintain unity in the local community, help form amicable relationships and establish alliances, and, on the whole, maintain and strengthen the chieftain's own power. Economic, social, and political aspects are thus intertwined.

In particular, the sagas' accounts of a number of northern Norwegian chieftains during the late Viking Age have led archaeologists and historians to think along these lines. The sagas describe complex activities led by the chieftains, both with regard to diversified local production and links to the distant surrounding country. Moreover, these texts stress how generous and liberal the chieftains were with material contributions to their allies and subordinates.⁵²

As we have already mentioned, the Sámi (in parts of the coastal area) were probably attached to the Norse chieftains' 'redistributive systems' as specialized hunters and trappers.⁵³ The Sámi could deliver high quality furs and hunting products to the chieftains who, in turn, controlled the more distant trade routes and could export furs to exchange partners further south in Scandinavia, on the continent, and in England. In other words, the furs provided the chieftains with a welcome 'foreign currency' that they could exchange for foreign status goods, which were necessary for them to maintain their social status.

⁵¹ Odner 1973.

⁵² Odner 1973; Storli 2006.

⁵³ Odner 1983; Schanche 1986; Hansen 1990b.

The foremost written evidence about this contact and what kind of goods the Sámi delivered is *Ohthere's Account*. This text provides a first-hand description of the conditions in northern Norway and in northern Fennoscandia, along with the trade routes southward to Denmark and further to England. The account was presented by the North Norwegian chieftain Ohthere (Ottar) to the court of the Wessex king, Alfred, in ca. 890. The king was then in the process of having a classical work of history from the fifth century, the *World History of Orosius*, translated into Old English. Since this work did not cover the conditions in northern Europe, Ohthere's account was included as an addendum.

Concerning the tribute or tax later known as the 'Finn tax,' which northern Norwegian chieftains claimed from the Sámi, Ohthere states:

But their wealth consists mostly of the tax [tribute?] that the Finnas pay them. The tax consists of animal skins and of bird feathers and whale bones and of those ship ropes that are made from whale's [or walrus?] hide and from seal's. Each pay according to his rank [or lineage]: the highest in rank has to pay fifteen marten skins and five reindeer skins and one bear skin and ten ambers of feathers and a bear- or otter-skin tunic and two ship ropes; each must be sixty *ells* long, one must be made from whale's [or walrus?] hide, the other from sealskin.

A significant feature of this excerpt is that the tax appears differentiated. Each person pays according to his status (position), and the contributions of the most distinguished person stand out as very extensive. This may support more recent suggestions that Sámi society became socially differentiated during the Viking Age (see chap. 3.5 and 4.5). One possible source of error, however, is that the tax could have been collective, meaning that it represents an entire local Sámi community (or *siida*, see chap. 4.3). Ohthere's indirect reference to the other Norwegian chieftains on Hålogaland ("their wealth") might also suggest that the chieftains had arrived at a sort of alliance or an agreement about how they were going to redistribute the tribute. Regarding what the Sámi received in exchange, however, Ohthere says nothing. The Sámi likely received goods produced by other participants within regional or neighboring redistributive systems, primarily iron, grain, and domestic animal products. In addition, they may have received some of the imported goods the Hålogaland chieftains procured on the continent and in England. A form of return payment could also have been political protection against other groups penetrating into the Sámi's area. In order to better understand the nature of trade in different parts of the Sámi area, we must look closer at the archaeological, historical, and linguistic material at hand.

OHTHERE'S ACCOUNT

Translated by Janet Bately, and reproduced after Janet Bately & Anton Englert (eds.): *Ohthere's Voyages. A late 9th century account of voyages along the coasts of Norway and Denmark and its cultural context*, (Maritime Culture of the North, 1), Roskilde 2007, pp. 44–47.^a

Ohthere said to his lord, King Alfred, that he lived furthest north of all Northmen [Norwegians]. He said that he lived in the northern part of the land, beside the West Sea. He said however that the land extends a very long way north from there, but it is all waste, except that in a few places here and there Finnas camp, engaged in hunting in winter and in summer in fishing by the sea. He said that on a certain occasion he wished to investigate how far the land extended in a northerly direction, or whether anyone lived north of the waste [or wilderness].

Then he went north along the coast, he kept the wasteland on his starboard side and the open sea on his port side all the way for three days. Then he was as far north as the furthest the whale hunters go. Then he continued to travel north, as far as he could sail in the next three days.

Then the land turned east, or the sea into the land, he did know which of the two, but he knew that he waited there for a wind from the west and slightly north and then sailed east along the coast as far as he could sail in four days.

Then he had to wait there for a wind from the north, since the land there turned in a southerly direction, or the sea into the land, he did not know which of the two. Then he sailed from there in a southerly direction along the coast as far as he could sail in five days.

Then a large river there stretched up into the land. Then they turned up into that river, because they dared not sail on past [or across] the river because of hostility, since the land was all settled on the other side of the river. He had not previously encountered any settled land since he traveled from his own home, but there was waste land all the way on his starboard side, except for fishermen and [wild]fowlers and hunters, and they were all Finnas, and open sea was always on his port side.

The Beormas had settled their land very well, but they dared not come in there. But the land of the Terfinnas was all waste, except where hunters camped, or fishermen, or fowlers. The Beormas told them [or him] many stories both about their own land and about the lands that were around them, but he did not know what there was of truth in it, because he did not see it himself. The Finnas and the Beormas, it seemed to him, spoke practically one and the same language.

He chiefly went there, in addition to the surveying of the land, for the walruses, because they have very fine bone in their teeth—they brought some of the teeth to the king—and their hide is very good for ship's ropes.

^a With kind permission of Janet Bately and Anton Englert—on behalf of the Viking Ship Museum, Roskilde.

This whale [i.e., walrus] is much smaller than other whales—it is not longer than seven ells long—but the best whale hunting is in his own land: they are forty-eight ells long and the biggest fifty ells long; he said that he and six others killed sixty of them in two days.

He was a very prosperous man in respect of those possessions that their wealth consists in, of wild animals. When he sought the king, he still had six hundred domesticated animals unsold. These animals they call reindeer; six of them were *stæl* reindeer. They are very valuable [prized] among the Finnas, since they catch the wild reindeer with them.

He was among the foremost men in that land. However, he did not have more than twenty head of cattle and twenty sheep and twenty pigs, and the little that he ploughed he ploughed with horses. But their wealth consists mostly of the tax [tribute?] that the Finnas pay them. The tax consists of animals' skins and of birds' feathers and whale's bone and of those ship's ropes that are made from whale's [or walrus?] hide and from seal's. Each pay according to his rank [or lineage]: the highest in rank has to pay fifteen marten's skins and five reindeer's and one bear's skin and ten ambers of feathers and a bear- or otter-skin tunic and two ship's ropes; each must be sixty ells long, one must be made from whale's [or walrus?] hide, the other from sealskin.

He said that the land of the Northmen [Norwegians] was very long and very narrow. All of it that may be grazed or ploughed, that lies along the sea, and that is nevertheless very rocky in some places, and wild moors [or mountains?] lie to the east and above, running parallel to the inhabited land. On the moors dwell Finnas. And the inhabited land is broadest towards the east [i.e., southern Norway], and ever the further north the narrower; to the east it may be sixty miles broad or somewhat broader and in the middle thirty or broader; and to the north, where it was narrowest, he said that it might be three miles broad to the moorland, and the moorland subsequently in some places as broad as may be crossed in two weeks and in some places as broad as may be crossed in six days. Then alongside the southern part of the land, on the other side of the moorland, is the land of the *Svear*, up to the northern part of the land; and alongside the northern part of the land the land of the *Cwenas*. The *Cwenas* sometimes make raids on the Northmen [Norwegians] over the moorland, sometimes the Northmen [Norwegians] on them. And there are very large fresh water lakes throughout the moors, and the *Cwenas* carry their boats over on to the lakes and from there make raids on the Northmen [Norwegians]; they have small and very light boats.

Ohthere said that the district in which he lived is called Hålogaland. He said that no one lived to the north of it [or him? or them?]. Then there is a port in the southern part of the land which is called *Sciringes healh* [Kaupang]. To this he said that it was not possible to sail in one month, if one camped [logged?] at night and each day had a favourable wind; and all the time he must sail along the coast; and on his starboard side there will be first the land of the *Irar* [Ireland] and then the islands [Orkneys and Shetlands] that are between Ireland and this land [i.e., Britain]. Then this land is in that position until he comes to *Sciringes healh* [Kaupang], and all the way on the port side North Way [Norway?].

To the south of this *Sciringes healh* [Kaupang] a very great sea penetrates up into the land; it is broader than any man may see over, and *Gotland* [Jutland] is on the other side opposite to it and afterwards *Sillende*. The sea stretches many hundred miles up into the land. And from *Sciringes healh* [Kaupang] he said that he sailed in five days to the *port* which is called 'at the Heaths' [Hedeby], which stands between Wends and Saxons and Angol and is subject [or belongs] to the Danes.

When he sailed towards that place from *Sciringes healh* [Kaupang], then Denmark was on his port side and the open sea on his starboard side for three days. An then, for two days before he came to the Heaths [Hedeby], Jutland and *Sillende* and many islands were on his starboard side—in those lands the English lived, before they came to this country—and for two days the islands that are subject [or belong] to Denmark were then on his port side.

3.4 SLAB-LINED PITS, BLUBBER OIL, AND INTERACTION IN THE FAR NORTH

An illustrative expression of regional variation among the northern hunting societies in the Iron Age is the slab-lined pits (*hellegroper*) that we find along the coast of northern Troms and Finnmark counties. These pits are found right above the beach zone and have an oval or rectangular outline measuring about 2–4 × 1–2 meters, and are dug down 0.5 m into the ground. The pits have been found to be lined with slabs along the sides and in the bottom (see fig. 7), and they usually contain large quantities of charcoal and fire-cracked stones. They are often clustered in small groups of up to five pits, but larger sites containing thirty to forty pits have also been found. Previously, they were interpreted and referred to as graves, and in oral tradition they were generally known as 'Russian graves.' Archaeological investigations in the 1980s and 1990s, however, have shown that they were production pits used to extract blubber oil or oil from whale and/or seal blubber. The location of the pits on the outer coast and in the immediate vicinity of the shoreline, as well as chemical analyses of animal fat found in them, all point in this direction.⁵⁴ They also have parallels mentioned in the historical literature. An account from the English ambassador to Russia from 1588 describes how the oil was extracted from seal blubber in a similar manner in the White Sea area. After having dug pits on the shore, the seal hunters laid the blubber in

⁵⁴ Schanche 1992; Henriksen 1995.



Fig. 7. Excavated slab-lined pit in Mellaneset at Kjølnes, Berlevåg municipality. In the pit which is dated to 550–750 AD, a large vertebra from a whale was found. (Photo: Bjørnar Olsen.)

layers in the pits with red-hot stones. The hot stones caused the blubber to melt and the finished oil floated up and could be filtered out.⁵⁵

The chronological distribution of the slab-lined pits is of great interest. The oldest date from AD 100–200, but they seem to become common from the fourth century AD. The most intensive phase of usage is between AD 600 and 900, while only one pit is dated after the eleventh century.⁵⁶ This means that the slab-lined pits came into use at the same time as the consolidation of the farming and chieftain communities in Nordland and southern Troms. Their geographical distribution is also intriguing (see fig. 9). They are found primarily in northern Troms and Finnmark counties, with the mouth of the Lyngenfjord as a sort of border to the south (even though a few are found as far south as Håkøy, Tromsø municipality). The greatest concentrations are found in northern Troms (in particular Arnøy, Skjervøy municipality), but they appear frequently along the

⁵⁵ Tegengren 1965, 452.

⁵⁶ Henriksen 1995, 57–58.



Fig. 8. Excavated floor level of dwelling dating to ca. 100 BC at Slettnes, Sørøya, Finnmark. (Photo: Bjørnar Olsen/Tromsø Museum).

outer coast of Finnmark to the Varanger fjord. This means that the slab-lined pits primarily occur north of the Norse settlement area in northern Norway, but that the largest concentrations are found in the border area immediately to the north and east.

Until recently, few traces of settlement were known to exist in the same area as the slab-lined pits. Investigations during the past twenty years, however, have led to the discovery of a number of Sámi settlement sites along the coast of Finnmark and northern Troms. These consist of small circular house foundations (and likely also tent foundations) with centrally placed hearths. Compared to the dwellings from the Late Stone Age and the beginning of the Early Metal Age, the Iron Age dwellings are smaller and the floor surface is normally not dug down (see fig. 8). This makes them far less visible in the terrain, which probably explains why they escaped the archaeologists' attention for so long. Excavations have shown that the floor area is divided by rows of stone (or whale bones) in a manner corresponding to what we find in the Sámi *bealljegoahti* (the round turf hut and tent) from the historic era (see box text: The Turf Hut as

Microcosm). This type of dwelling has been dated as early as the first century AD, and it continues through the Iron Age and medieval period.⁵⁷ In other words, it represents the predecessor of the Sámi round turf hut. These dwelling sites often appear in connection with slab-lined pits and, in many cases, particularly in northern Troms and western Finnmark, there are also traces of narrow boathouses or boat landings. Together, these finds may attest to a seasonal use of the outer coast, where production of blubber oil was one important activity. Based on historical sources such as Othere's account, it is reasonable to assume that this is evidence of summer hunting. This opens up the possibility of finding traces of more solid houses connected with winter dwelling further into the fjords.

The slab-lined pits and the extraction of blubber oil have been linked to new contacts and exchange networks in the north. The reasons for this must partly be sought in the termination of contact with central and eastern Russia in the first century AD. Imported goods, in particular metals, had become very important in hunter-gatherer communities. Archaeological material, especially from the rich settlement sites at Kjelmøy in South Varanger municipality, show that iron tools had become an integrated part of the technology during the last centuries BC⁵⁸ These tools were special pointed and bladed tools such as knives and tips for arrows, harpoons, and hooks otherwise made of bone or antler. The discontinuation of the (south-) eastern relations could have caused a shortage of iron and other metals, and, from what we know today, there is little to suggest that the hunter-gatherers of this area produced their own iron.⁵⁹

The contemporary establishment of Germanic farming communities further south along the coast, however, provided new possibilities for contacts, supplies, and markets for the hunters living in the far north. Their establishment, however, meant that the economic strategies developed in the Early Metal Period had to be changed. Even though furs were also a coveted commodity for these communities, the need could be met through exchange with nearby Sámi hunting communities further to the south (see below). This implies that demands and specialization within a redistributive economic system could have had serious consequences far outside the Norse settlement area.

⁵⁷ Olsen 1993; Hesjedal et al. 1996; Grydeland 1996; Odner 1992, 2001; Myrvoll 2011.

⁵⁸ Solberg 1909; Olsen 1984, 1994.

⁵⁹ Sundquist 1998; Jørgensen 2010.

For the communities in the coastal areas of Finnmark and northern Troms, this probably initiated a new orientation toward maritime resources, in which the production of oil from seal and whale blubber became very important. Some of the sites for extracting blubber oil are so extensive that their existence cannot be explained by local consumption alone, and the slab-lined pits' chronology also suggests that production was channeled into a specific external market.⁶⁰ Contacts with the Germanic/Norse communities may have been established through the whaling expeditions that the chieftains organized along the coast of Finnmark, an activity mentioned in Othere's account,⁶¹ and where trade with the Sámi could also have been a motivating factor. One possibility for tangible cooperation may have been that whale blubber from Norse whalers was processed into oil by a coastal Sámi population. The concentration of structures along the outer coastal zone fits well with such a hypothesis.⁶²

Blubber oil probably played a large role in shipping, for the saturation of and as a lubricant for wood and ropes, and also in treatment and manufacture of leather. As a result, there was considerable market for blubber oil in Europe.⁶³ In Germanic/Norse communities in northern Norway, this oil was also valuable for heating and lighting indoors. This usage must have been imperative in connection with feasts and social gatherings at the northern Norwegian chieftains' residences, for example at Borg, Bjarkøy, and Trondenes. Heating and lighting must have required large quantities of oil. This need, together with an expanding seafaring shipping trade, may have created a considerable market for oil in the Late Iron Age.⁶⁴

With regard to the payment that the coastal Sámi population obtained for its blubber oil, iron may well have been an important item. As mentioned, the collapse of their connections eastward meant that the import of iron from Russia (or from local production places in Finland/Karelia) ceased. Previously, scholars believed that this led to a shortage of iron and an increased use of stone in the northernmost hunting communities.⁶⁵ More recent archaeological investigations show that this is not the case, however, and that iron was relatively abundant. It seems reasonable to

⁶⁰ Cf. Gjessing 1939, 48–49.

⁶¹ Jørgensen 1994; see box text above.

⁶² Henriksen 1955.

⁶³ Baudou 1992, 107–108; Gustavsson 1987, 37.

⁶⁴ Henriksen 1995.

⁶⁵ Olsen 1984, 219.

assume that this metal was acquired through economic dealings with the Norse population (and with Finnish and Karelian groups further south).⁶⁶

More prestigious metals than iron may have been traded via this contact as well. The Laksefjord hoard from Vestre Eikvik on the east side of Laksefjord in Lebesby municipality provides unique evidence in this regard.⁶⁷ This rich find was made in a potato field in the 1920s and consists of one large and five smaller gold spiral rings, one flat gold ring, and a plaited silver armband.⁶⁸ The find is exceptional in a Scandinavian context, and both the objects' dating and area of origin are uncertain. The archaeologists who examined the find most thoroughly think that a dating of AD 500–600 is most probable, and suggest a western European origin.⁶⁹ The spiral rings, and especially the way two of them are attached to the largest, are reminiscent of the gold payment rings from the migration period.⁷⁰

Finds of Scandinavian ornaments in Sámi graves also attests to trade contacts with Norse groups. Only three Sámi graves with dated grave goods from the period AD 300–800 are known in Finnmark, and the ornaments in two of them (possibly also in the third) were imported from the Germanic area. Although there are few imported Iron Age finds dated earlier than the 10th century in Finnmark, they indicate that contacts were primarily westward. This stands in stark contrast to the provenance of the ornaments that begin to appear in the burials from the tenth and eleventh centuries. From that period, the vast majority of ornaments are of eastern origin, primarily from the Ladoga area and more generally the area around the Gulf of Finland.⁷¹

3.4.1 *The Slab-Lined Pits as Territorial Markers?*

The slab-lined pits' geographical distribution can also be read as an expression of ethnic boundaries—or as an argument in the negotiations

⁶⁶ Jørgensen 2010.

⁶⁷ Brøgger 1931; Sjøvold 1974, 178; Adriansen 1997, 53–54.

⁶⁸ Reymert 1980, 91–95.

⁶⁹ Gjessing 1939, 41–42; Sjøvold 1974, 328.

⁷⁰ This dating, however, is weakened by the plaited silver arm ring which is typical of silver rings of the Viking Age type from western Scandinavia (Hårdh 1996, as well as personal communication). The flat, ornamented gold ring could also suggest this dating, but with a background in eastern European or eastern Scandinavian parallels (Reymert 1980, 95). The hoard may have a mixed chronological and geographic origin, and could have been buried together at a later date.

⁷¹ Schanche 2000, 322–323; Hildre 2002, 83–87.

over such boundaries. Slab-lined pits of this type are not found south of Tromsø, and their occurrence markedly increases north of Lyngenfjorden (see fig. 9). The pits' southwesterly limit corresponds well with what historical sources say about the northern boundary of Norse settlement in the Viking Age and Early Middle Ages (see box text: *Ohthere's Account*), and also with archaeological distributions of traces of Norse (or Germanic) settlement.

It is also interesting to note that this boundary at Lyngenfjorden coincides rather precisely with a taxation boundary known from the later part of the Middle Ages, namely, the western limit of the Norwegian-Russian common taxation area. The Russians, that is, the Novgorod republic, and their allies the Karelians, were supposed to collect tax legally from the Sámi as far west as Lyngenfjorden (Lyngstuva, see Chapter 4). The fact that the largest production sites are found just north of the northern boundary of the Norse settlement area can partly be explained by proximity to the market. However, the numerous traces of slab-lined pits in the border zone could also be read as a territorial manifestation of Sámi presence and rights and thus indicate that an ethnic boundary was already established in the Iron Age.

However, some clarification is required: the first slab-lined pits were hardly built with the intent to signal ethnicity and territorial rights. Originally, technological and economic significance were primary. Yet over time, the slab-lined pits could *also* have acquired an ethnic, symbolic function through their significance for trade between Germanic/Norse society and the Sámi. The gradual accumulation of these characteristic slab-lined pits in the shore zone eventually made the people who moved about in the coastal areas conscious of a Sámi presence. As a crucial component in the production of a desired commodity (blubber oil), the slab-lined pits may also have acquired an additional sign function that involved messages about ethnic boundaries, rights to resources, as well as rights and obligations for the transaction partners. For travelers from the south who crossed Lyngenfjorden, the sudden and massive presence of slab-lined pits along the northern shores, a presence also emphasized by their smoke and smell, may well have acted as a strong articulation that an ethnic boundary had also been crossed.⁷²

⁷² Henriksen 1995, 106.

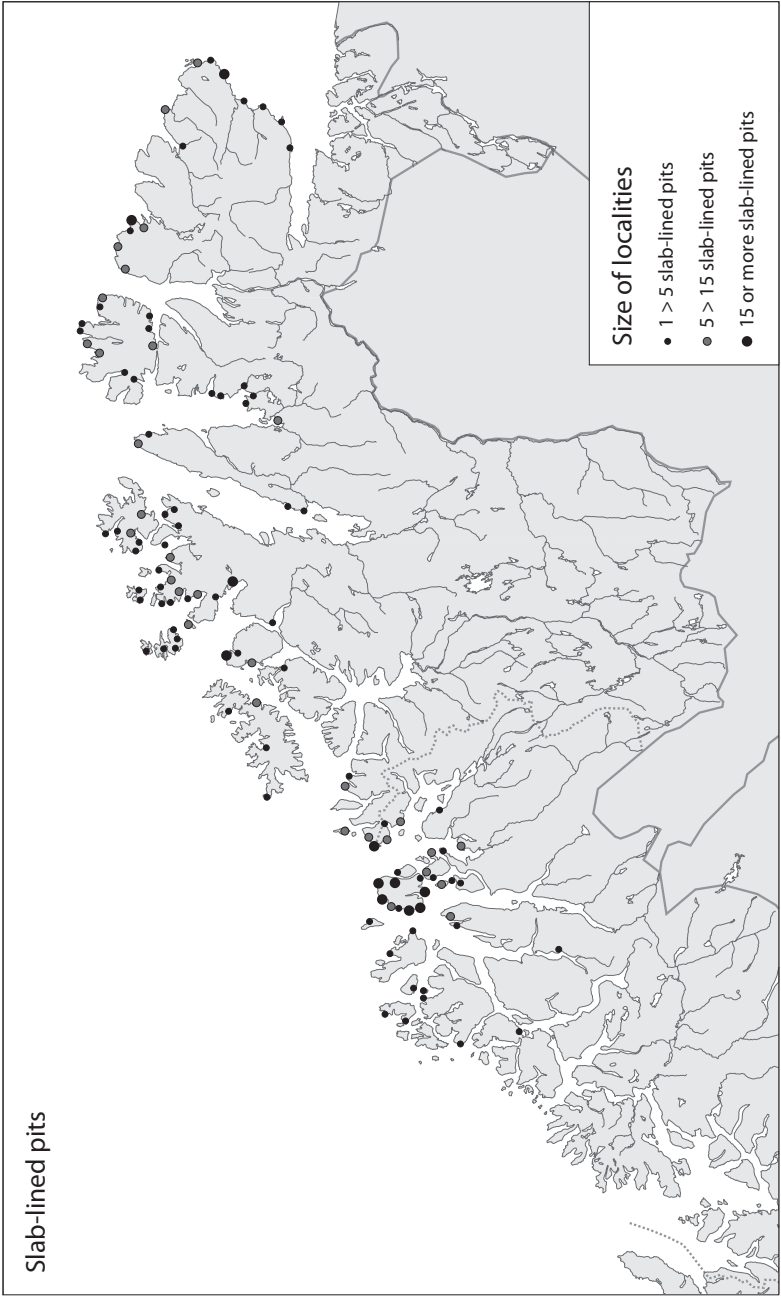


Fig. 9. The geographical distribution of the slab-lined pits (from Henriksen 1995, later records added).

The slab-lined pits disappeared at the end of the Viking Age, and, in all likelihood, this change is connected to the emergence of new social and economic conditions. The Norse chieftaincies experienced a period of unrest before their rule finally collapsed (see chap. 3.10). At the same time, new trade networks to the east were established, and in these networks blubber oil no longer seems to have been an object of demand. Over large areas of Fennoscandia, there was an increased interest in the resources of the interior, even though hunting products from the coast were also important. As we will see below, the Sámi now recreated their 'eastern identity,' which also amounted to a marked homogenization of material cultural expressions.

3.5 NEGOTIATING BORDERS: SETTLEMENT AND ETHNIC LANDSCAPES

Up to the 1970s, research on northern Norway's Iron Age was primarily concerned with traces of Germanic/Norse settlement in the form of farm structures with long houses, boathouses, and graves. The contemporary traces of a Sámi population were to a large degree unknown—and perhaps also of less interest.⁷³ It is somewhat paradoxical that in spite of the fact that a very small portion of Iron Age research is explicitly concerned with the Sámi, their continuous presence is implicitly assumed in the many postulates about taxation and trade with the Sámi (*finnkaup*) as a basis for the chieftains' power.⁷⁴ These suppositions have largely been based on information contained in sagas and in particular, Othere's Account. In addition, archaeological traces of Sámi settlement were scarce along the coast south of Tromsø and this also contributed to the disregard of the Sámi in Iron Age research.

In the 1980s, this idea of an invisible Sámi population was challenged by the archaeologist Audhild Schanche. Based upon the hypothesis that the distribution of Norse settlement could indirectly say something about the boundaries of Sámi settlement,⁷⁵ an alternative method for tracing Sámi settlement was developed.⁷⁶ The boundaries of Germanic/Norse settlement had traditionally been seen as ecologically determined and

⁷³ See Simonsen 1967, 67; Sjøvold 1962, 224; Schanche and Olsen 1983.

⁷⁴ Such as Brøgger 1931, 298; Lund 1965, 298; Vinsrygg 1979, 74.

⁷⁵ See Hansen 1984a.

⁷⁶ Schanche 1986, 1989.

brought about by climatic conditions for grain cultivation.⁷⁷ This created both a border to the north (the Lyngen/Malangen border) and a border at the innermost areas of the fjords and the interior to the east. Thus, climatic conditions caused the Germanic people to settle along the outer coastal strip of Nordland and southern Troms counties. Here they could 'live out' their political and economic forms and create the surplus that the chieftains' redistributive economy required.⁷⁸

Based on a detailed study of the distribution of Germanic/Norse Iron Age graves in the southern Troms region, Schanche questioned the assumption that the spread of the Germanic population was determined by the boundary for grain cultivation.⁷⁹ In the Gratangen, Lavangen, and Salangen fjords, where soil quality and climatic conditions were favorable for agriculture, there are few traces of Norse settlement. Thus, the eastern border of this settlement could not have been determined by ecological conditions alone and is more likely a reflection of the boundary between Norwegian and Sámi land. According to Schanche, the extent of the Norse settlement can be seen as an negative imprint of the Sámi settlement area, being those inner fjord and interior regions that do not have archaeological traces of Norse settlement. The ethnic boundary Schanche reconstructed in southern Troms has later been supported by studies of the oldest landed property relationships in the area.⁸⁰ Later Sámi Iron Age and medieval sites have also been detected in the fjord areas and the valleys of southern Troms and northern Nordland county, and can be seen as a confirmation of Schanche's model.⁸¹ Nevertheless, it is important to emphasize that the apparent 'Norse' coastal landscape further afield, such as Lofoten and Vesterålen, most probably also had Sámi settlement during the Iron Age and later historical periods. Thus, the boundary must be mainly understood as a boundary for Norse settlement and cultural hegemony.

According to Schanche, the said boundary was established in the later Iron Age and remained stable up to the Viking Age. A more meticulous study of the development of settlement throughout the Middle Ages also suggests that the boundary of Norse/Norwegian settlement actually remained in force somewhat longer than Schanche assumed. Only after

⁷⁷ Sjøvold 1974, 347–354; Binns 1978, 138–184.

⁷⁸ Odner 1983, 85.

⁷⁹ Schanche 1986.

⁸⁰ Hansen 1990b.

⁸¹ Hansen 1990b; Andersen 2002, 2005, 2011; Holdø 2004.

ca. AD 1200 did Norwegian settlement reach any appreciable level in the fjords.

The fact that the Norse chieftaincies did not expand northward and into the inner fjords and the interior was probably due to several conditions. One of them could have been the fragile political balance of power between the chieftaincies.⁸² As mentioned above, the chieftaincies were autonomous entities characterized by rivalries and a warrior culture. Binding alliances made through marriage and exchange of gifts defined rules for acceptable conduct and limited political and territorial imbalance. These rules could have involved sanctions against attempts at territorial expansion into the Sámi area. The fear of other chieftains' political and military reprisals prevented territorial expansion.

In addition, centralizing forces had the effect of restricting 'geographical behavior.' This applied, among other things, to the members' need for security and integration into society, which, together with the ruling elite's desire to have control of households, contributed to limiting the extent of the settlement area.⁸³ Ecological circumstances were also of significance for the delimitation of the Norse settlement. This fact is related both to the socio-economic importance of farming in Norse societies and the crucial cultural role farming (and the farm) played in the ascription of Norse identity. Moreover, attachment to the coastal landscape, and the existential security and identity that the homeland provided, may also have been decisive for the geographical stability of the Norse settlements. In other words, the ethnic distinction between Norse and Sámi was also affected and mediated by geographical and economical conditions. Where one lived and how one lived had implications for one's identity. Crossing a territorial (and economic) border could raise questions about identity and self-ascription. Over generations, this territorial and topographic awareness may have become institutionalized as a relatively permanently constructed boundary for where a Norse person could settle. This disciplining of 'geographical behavior' could also have been strengthened and justified by conceptions of the land of 'others' as dangerous or inhabited by evil forces. To venture into the 'wilderness' of the inner fjords and the interior meant to leave a secure world represented by the farm and cultivated land and a landscape domesticated by graves and traces left by ancestors.

⁸² Schanche 1986, 128.

⁸³ Schanche 1986, 130.

Such cultural geography can also be read in the Norwegian place name material from southern Troms county. The area around the Vågsfjord basin, that is, the basin between the Hinnøy, Grytøy, Senja, Andørja, and Rolla islands, is a core area for Norse Iron Age settlement as represented by a large number of graves and stray finds.⁸⁴ The sound between Andørja and Rolla has, since time immemorial, been referred to as 'the Settled Area' (*Bygden*). In other words, this name indicates the center of the cultivated, domesticated landscape from the Norwegian point of view. Beyond lay the fjord areas, void of Norse settlement and which were regarded as typically Sámi settlement areas. Here, we find farm names like *Lia* (the hillside) and *Reite* (bounded, cultivated patch of ground) alongside names formed with suffixes such as *-skog* (forest) and *-voll* (grassy field), all of which are evidence of a later expansion into the original 'wilderness.'⁸⁵

In more general, broad geography, the ancient landscape of Finnmark was also found in the interior, stretching southward like a wedge (see fig. 11). In addition, the meaning of Finnmark could have included an unspecified type of geographic landscape, in the sense of a forest or an area where the Sámi lived (the old Norse word *mork* means forest or borderland).⁸⁶ Corresponding etymological connections with the word *mark* (in the sense 'border', 'edge') are also found in a number of European languages, including early Germanic.⁸⁷ There is thus a distinction between 'the settled area,' the inhabited, cultivated part of land where 'we' live, and the 'borderlands' or the 'forest,' inhabited by 'others.' It is also interesting to note how conceptions of the 'others' (as heathens, savages, etc.) in European culture have been linked to a similar sort of spatial division between civilization, cultivated land, and people on one hand, and, on the other, barbarianism, forests, and 'savages.' In the *Historia Norvegiæ*, from the middle of the twelfth century, Finnmark is described in this way:

Along Norway, an immense wilderness stretches that separates the country from the heathens. This wilderness is populated by Finns and wild animals, which the Finns eat half-raw and whose skins they use for clothing. These Finns are expert hunters who wander about individually with no fixed abode.⁸⁸

⁸⁴ Schanche 1986.

⁸⁵ Hansen 1990b.

⁸⁶ Mundal 1996, 102.

⁸⁷ Anttonen 1993, 29.

⁸⁸ Storm, G. 1888: 82–83; authors' translation.

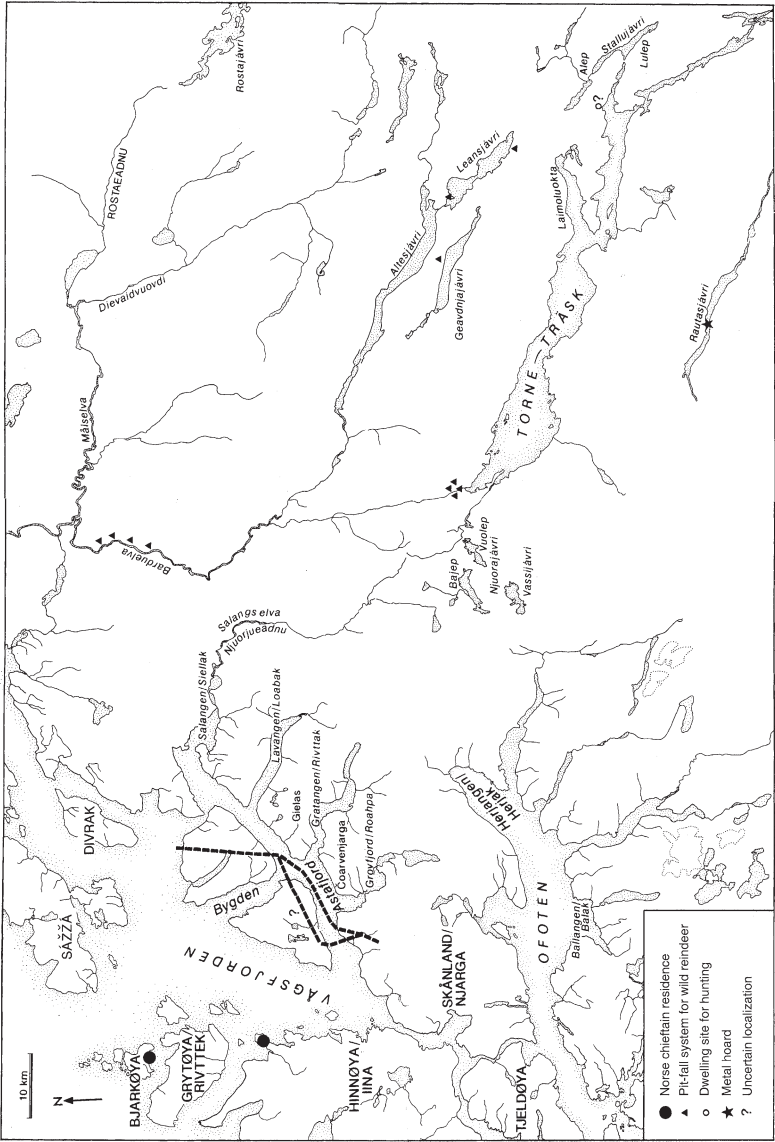


Fig. 10. The boundary of the Norse and Sámi settlement area in South Troms during the Late Iron Age/Viking Age (after Schanche 1986 and Hansen 1990b, supplemented by records from Sommereth 2009).

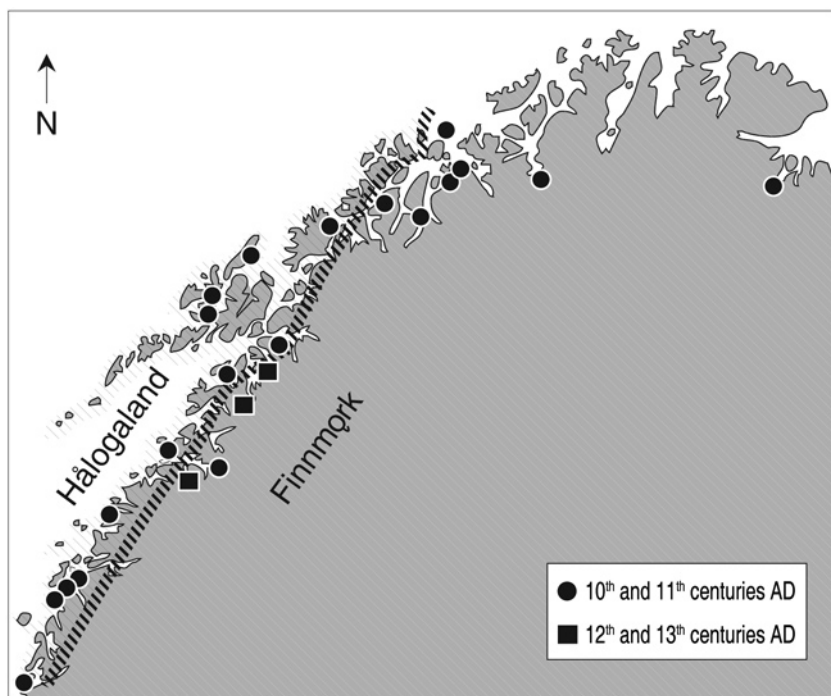


Fig. 11. The distribution of silver hoards from the Viking Age and early Middle Ages in northern Norway, seen in relation to the old territorial border between Hålogaland and Finnmark. (Map by Ernst Høgtun, Tromsø Museum—Universitetsmuseet.)

This is reflected in the etymological links in many European languages between ‘forest’ and ‘savages’ or ‘barbarians’ (e.g. *silva* and *silvaticus* in Latin, *Wald* and *wild* in German).⁸⁹ Scandinavian medieval sources also link the Sámi with forested areas in several cases; both in the *Historia Norvegiæ* and in a Swedish royal decree from 1328, the Sámi are referred to as *homines silvestris*.

3.5.1 Silver Hoards, Borders and Gift Exchange

A special category of archaeological finds can perhaps shed light on these borders and how they were maintained—especially when relationships became more tense from the latter part of the Viking Age and

⁸⁹ Fabian 1983.

onwards. People started to deposit silver hoards throughout much of the Scandinavian region and surrounding areas in the Viking Age. The hoards consist of neck and arm rings, coins, brooches, bars, and hack-silver, i.e. silver objects that have been cut into small pieces. There were probably many different reasons for depositing hoards of silver objects in the ground over such a large area, but here we will concentrate on the northern Norwegian hoard finds, since they shed an interesting light on the relationship between the Sámi and the Norse.

A total of twenty silver hoard finds are known from northern Norway, and neck rings are the objects most frequently found in them. Coins and hacksilver, usually associated with payment and most common in southern Scandinavia, are rarely found in the northern context.⁹⁰ In the only find north of Bodø with coins, the now-lost Haukøy find from northern Troms, the coins were used as pendants in earrings. Corresponding use of coins as pendants is known from finds at northern Swedish sacrificial sites⁹¹ and indicates that the use of the coins has changed. Apart from three silver hoards (Kjøpsvik, Musken, and Skar) believed to have been deposited in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, northern Norwegian hoard finds have generally been dated to the latter part of the tenth and eleventh centuries.⁹² However, according to the most detailed study of northern Norwegian hoards hitherto conducted, the hoards from Troms and to the north (east) probably mostly date to the Early Middle Ages.⁹³

One striking feature of the distribution of these silver hoards is that they seldom occur in what, during the Viking Age, was the central Norse settlement area in northern Norway. Most of them are found at the margins of this area and frequently linked to *finnefjorder* (Finn fjords) in Nordland and Troms counties. Likewise, they are rarely found far inside the Sámi areas, instead confining their presence to the border area or what might have been meeting places of the two ethnic groups. Particularly interesting is the accumulation in the border zone in northern Troms.⁹⁴ In the same way, the three later hoards from the twelfth or thirteenth century (from Skar in Skjerstad and Musken and Kjøpsvik in Tysfjord) were all found in fjord areas inhabited by the Sámi.⁹⁵ Outside northern Norway

⁹⁰ Spangen 2005.

⁹¹ Zachrisson 1984.

⁹² Sjøvold 1974; Reymert 1980; Munch 1970, 1979.

⁹³ Spangen 2005, 78–83.

⁹⁴ Zachrisson 1984, 103–109; Hårdh 1996, 43, 63.

⁹⁵ Munch 1970, 1979.

as well, silver hoards tend to occur in border or transit zones to Sámi areas. In Finland, most of the hoard finds and the largest finds are from the Kuusamo area in the northeast.⁹⁶ This area already stands out in the early Metal Age as a transit area because of the vital waterways running through it that connect the Gulf of Bothnia with the White Sea.⁹⁷ A recent silver find from Nanguniemi on Lake Enare in northern Finland may also be said to belong to an area that have the character of a transit area during prehistoric and historical times.⁹⁸ In Norrland and southwest Finland, there are also similar hoard finds from areas which can be regarded as border or transit areas.⁹⁹

The most frequently occurring objects among the northern Norwegian hoard finds are silver arm and neck rings.¹⁰⁰ Neck rings seem to have been of particular importance. Furthermore, some of these hoards include brooches, earrings, coins, and pendants with chains and axe-shaped or cruciform attachments.¹⁰¹ According to Birgitta Hårdh, the neck rings found in the northern Norwegian hoard finds are partly of Scandinavian/Norwegian and partly of eastern (Finnish/Baltic) origin.¹⁰² Peculiar to the northern Norwegian hoard finds is that they include arm rings and ornaments of Finnish, Russian, and Eastern Baltic origin.¹⁰³ The Sámi made much use of ornaments from this area during the late Viking Age and Early Middle Ages, although these were primarily bronze ornaments. However, the shape of the ornaments is clearly associated with the Sámi culture even when they are made of silver. Among the silver hoards from Botnhamn on Senja, Haukøy and Eidet (Skjervøy municipality) and Flatvollen, Lyngen, we find chains with cross- and axe-shaped pendants. In Finnish finds, such as that from Nanguniemi, the axe-shaped pendants are attached to neck rings.¹⁰⁴ The fusion of western and eastern traditions is manifested very well in the lost hoard find from Haukøy: in addition to a neck ring, a clasp crucifix, and a Christ figure, it also included earrings of Karelian

⁹⁶ Edgren 1993, 226; Hårdh 1996, 152.

⁹⁷ Huurre 1986.

⁹⁸ See Ojanlatva 2003; Spangen 2005.

⁹⁹ See Hårdh 1996, 43.

¹⁰⁰ Spangen 2005.

¹⁰¹ Reymert 1980, 89–102.

¹⁰² Hårdh, 1996.

¹⁰³ Spangen 2005.

¹⁰⁴ Ojanlatva 2003, 117–118.



Fig. 12. Silver hoard from Botnhamn on Senja, Troms. (Photo: Olga Kvalheim, Tromsø Museum—Universitetsmuseet.)

or Finnish type, each with three pendants made from Anglo-Saxon coins. The find has been dated to the eleventh century.¹⁰⁵

Inger Zachrisson interprets these finds as sacrificial finds and believes that the precious metal had more religious than economic significance for the Sámi.¹⁰⁶ Audhild Schanche also believes the finds must be seen in a religious context, although she points out that the preference for silver distinguishes the hoard finds from the Sámi grave finds, where bronze is preferred.¹⁰⁷ It has been established that some of the silver ornaments in these hoard finds in northern Fennoscandia have a low silver content, which might indicate that they were produced specially for the Sámi to use in sacrificial contexts.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁵ Sjøvold 1974, 172; Skaare 1974, 379; Spangen 2005, 51–53.

¹⁰⁶ Zachrisson 1984.

¹⁰⁷ Schanche 2000, 281.

¹⁰⁸ Zachrisson 1984, 105; Hårdh 1996, 152; compare with Mulk 1996, 67.

Some of the objects forming part of the silver hoards, such as neck rings, are rarely if ever found in other archaeological contexts such as graves, dwelling places or sacrificial sites. This finding applies to both the Sámi and the Norse areas and these objects thus seem to have been withheld from personal use or attribution of status in both Norse and Sámi society.¹⁰⁹ This, combined with the fact that they are deposited in border or transit areas, make the silver hoards a particularly interesting manifestation of contemporary cultural and ethnic relations.

In her discussion of silver hoards in eastern Sweden, Torunn Zachrisson has brought to light some interesting information from the Icelandic *Svarfdæla Saga*. The saga tells how land claims were made by depositing silver and personal equipment at farm boundaries.¹¹⁰ Both Zachrisson and Lotte Hedeager have shown that the silver hoards of the Viking Age in southern Scandinavia were associated with the farms' outlying lands or border areas.¹¹¹ Although the situation in the north is different, in that it appears to be related to borders (or meeting places) between ethnic groups, the symbolism associated with the marking of borders could well be a parallel trait.¹¹²

As ethnographic evidence from various societies has shown, assets that form part of special social contexts are often kept outside normal economic circulation, since their significance as 'inalienable' religious or social objects would otherwise be 'threatened.' They must therefore be removed or destroyed as soon as that context or the connection that they manifest has been concluded.¹¹³ Distinct restrictions also seem to have applied to the objects included in hoards regarding the ways in which they were used and in what contexts. The actual deposition seems in many ways to have been an essential (and probably predestined) feature of the objects' lifecycle outside the northern regions as well, and the context in which this occurred would consequently be of considerable importance.¹¹⁴

The large number of silver hoards in the northern border region of the Norse settlement area, and the hybrid traits of some of the finds, indicate that they were of significance to both groups¹¹⁵ and that their deposition may have been performed in the presence of representatives

¹⁰⁹ Sjøvold 1974; Zachrisson 1984; Schanche 2000; Spangen 2005.

¹¹⁰ Zachrisson 1998.

¹¹¹ Hedeager 1999.

¹¹² Olsen 2000b; Spangen 2005.

¹¹³ Bradley 1990, 40.

¹¹⁴ Spangen 2005, 99–112.

¹¹⁵ Spangen 2005; Bruun 2007.

of both groups. Prior to their burial, the objects may have been used in joint rituals and the exchange of gifts between Norwegians and Sámi. The giving of gifts played an important role when social and political associations among the Norse chieftains were to be established or confirmed. The hoard finds could be an indication that this also occurred between Norwegians and Sámi. In addition to confirming the obligations with regard to the supply of commodities and services, agreements regarding land rights may also have been communicated. The subsequent deposition of the objects might have functioned as a kind of 'signing' of the agreement. As we shall see towards the end of this chapter, the deposit of the hoards occurred during a period when both the Sámi communities and the northern Norwegian chieftaincies were coming under heavy pressure. In a time of unrest, when a formerly stable situation seemed to be threatened and boundaries began to be violated, the deposition of silver may have been carried out as a symbolic confirmation of the border between the two ethnic groups.¹¹⁶

There is some support in linguistic data that the Sámi and Norwegians exchanged gifts in the Viking Age. Particularly intriguing is a Norse loanword in Sámi, *skean̄ka*, which means 'gift'.¹¹⁷ In Old Norse, the meaning is closer to 'drink' or 'serve,' 'pour' (Norwegian *skjenke*), and the link between a drink and a gift is rather obvious.¹¹⁸ It is well-known that drinking was closely related to the exchange of gifts and rituals in Germanic (and Norse) society. Drinking had a central place in the culture, as expressed archaeologically by drinking vessels appearing in high-status graves.¹¹⁹ In relation to this fact, Storli has pointed out that grain production by the Hålogaland chieftains could largely have been intended for the production of beer or mead to be drunk at ceremonial drinking bouts.¹²⁰ Thus, the fact that the Norse word for 'drink/pouring' appears in Sámi in the sense of 'gift' may well suggest that northern Norwegian chieftains used drinking bouts as a framework for exchanges with the Sámi.¹²¹

¹¹⁶ Olsen 2000b.

¹¹⁷ Qvigstad 1893, 302.

¹¹⁸ Schanche 2000, 305.

¹¹⁹ Storli 1986, 131–137.

¹²⁰ Storli 1994, 133.

¹²¹ Schanche 2000, 305.

3.5.2 *Marriages and Social Differentiation*

Closely associated with this hypothesis about interethnic alliances through the exchange of gifts is the interpretation presented by Inger Storli regarding possible marriages and kinship alliances between Norwegians and Sámi of high status.¹²² Her arguments are based on the finds of eastern ornaments from the Viking Age and Early Middle Ages in northern Norway. The largest group of these consists of brooches used on costumes (penannular brooches), but they also include pendants with attachments, often in the shape of stylized representations of various animals such as bears, two-headed horses, and birds. Most of the ornaments are made of bronze, but a few have also been found made of silver. The earliest ornaments can be dated back to the ninth century and were imported from the Permian settlement area in northwest Russia. The later and vast majority of the ornaments has, however, been dated to between 900 and 1200. These were produced in western Finland, Gotland, Karelia and the western Russia area. The bulk of the material has been dated to the eleventh and twelfth centuries.

Eastern ornaments in northern Norway are primarily found in Sámi graves or as stray finds in Sámi contexts.¹²³ They are therefore interpreted as having achieved a role as symbols of Sámi ethnicity by being distinct from the ornaments used by the Norse. Norwegian burial finds reveal that the Norse population used different costume and ornaments than the Sámi, although a certain hybridization has also been suggested.¹²⁴ The eastern ornaments in northern Norway may therefore be perceived as indicators of Sámi ethnicity, and the same applies to the types of ornaments used by the Norsemen. However, thirteen of the approximately seventy finds of eastern ornaments occur in Norse graves. Some of these graves are abundantly furnished and probably represent the upper strata of society. Seven of them are women's graves, some are uncertain, and only one can be identified as a man's grave. Storli interprets this as representing Sámi women who had married Norsemen.

She broadens the perspective, however, to apply to marriages between Norse women and Sámi men as well. In the Arjeplog area in the northern Swedish interior, there is a small group of Viking Age finds of the Scandinavian type. Two of the finds are women's graves. Moreover, there

¹²² Storli 1991, 1994.

¹²³ Reymert 1980; Zachrisson 1997, 206–208.

¹²⁴ Bruun 2007.

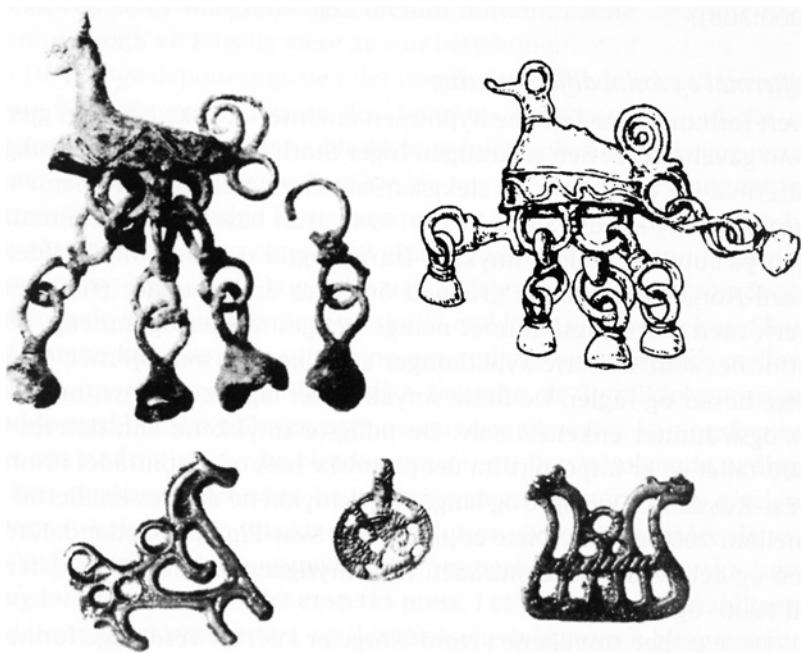
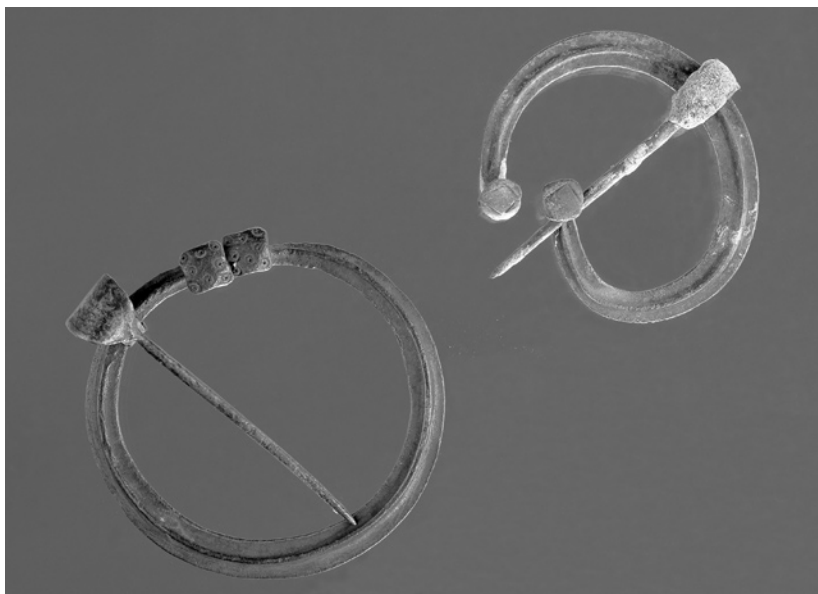


Fig. 13. Penannular brooches and pendants of eastern origin, typical of Sami grave and sacrificial finds from the late Viking Age and early Middle Ages (from Storli 1996 and Makarov 1997). Photo: Jorunn M. Rødli, Tromsø Museum—Universitetsmuseet.

is a well-known grave find from Ekkerøy near Vadsø. This find is very rich, consisting of ornaments of both Finnish-Baltic and western Scandinavian types. Due to the presence of Scandinavian ornaments, the grave was previously thought to be Norse (also by Storli), and was taken as evidence of either Norwegian settlement or a trading station here in the Viking Age.¹²⁵ These finds were, however, discovered in a scree grave (grave on a rock-strewn slope) in what was evidently a Sámi context.¹²⁶ One possible interpretation of the 'Norse' element is that this was a Norwegian woman who had married into a Sámi environment.¹²⁷ Both the sagas and Othere's account showed that northern Norwegian chieftains traveled through this area in the Viking Age and that they also nurtured contacts with the Sámi.

Consequently, we find women's graves containing Scandinavian ornament types in a Sámi area and women's graves with Sámi ornament types in Norwegian areas. Storli's interpretation is that Sámi women were buried in Norwegian areas and Scandinavian or Norwegian women were buried in Sámi areas. We know from different societies and types of societies, including the Norse/Germanic societies, that intermarriage or the exchange of marriage partners was important for maintaining binding political alliances.¹²⁸ Storli maintains, therefore, that it could have been natural to establish such binding links also with Sámi partners.¹²⁹

Storli's hypothesis is based on an understanding that within Sámi society in the Viking Age and Early Middle Ages, a hierarchy was established containing an elite associated with early reindeer herding. We agree with Storli that a hierarchy of this nature was established, but we are more inclined to believe that it was due to the social options which transactions and contact with the surrounding population provided. Control of imported commodities might have been an important source of power, and some burial sites from the late Viking Age/Early Middle Ages show striking wealth. One example is the previously mentioned burial find from Ekkerøy, although Sámi graves, which were almost as rich, have been found in Vardø and Aravuobma (Áravuopmi) near Torneträsk.¹³⁰ Since many of the Norse graves purportedly containing Sámi women are richly

¹²⁵ Gjessing 1939; Sjøvold 1974, 341.

¹²⁶ Schanche 2000.

¹²⁷ See also Bruun 2007.

¹²⁸ Gurevitj 1979.

¹²⁹ Storli 1986, 36–37.

¹³⁰ Schanche 2000.

furnished, Storli links them to the northern Norwegian social elite. This argument is strengthened by the fact that several of the sites have clear associations with the central places of the northern Norwegian chieftaincies. She thus advances the hypothesis that the northern Norwegian elite and the nascent Sámi elite could have been integrated in an economic community that may also have involved the exchange of spouses.¹³¹

3.5.3 *Linguistic Evidence of Interaction*

Linguistic material from this period provides evidence of the fact that there must have been extensive interaction between Norse and Sámi groups. An analysis of Norse loan words in the Sámi dialects in the area between Tysfjord in Nordland and up to Kvaløy and Karlsøy in Troms is particularly interesting in this connection. These words must have been borrowed from Norse during the period between AD 500–600 and 1000. Much of the borrowed language must have come from proto-Scandinavian, that is to say, from the north Germanic language form common in Scandinavia prior to the fundamental processes of change, which occurred around AD 600 to 800. A number of the terms relate to agriculture, the grain economy, and animal husbandry, which shows that this area must have been an important contact zone between Scandinavian and Sámi culture.¹³²

The linguist Asbjørn Nesheim identified the following words from the glossary of agriculture and animal husbandry borrowed by Sámi from proto-Scandinavian and Norwegian:

Table 1.

Sámi	Assumed Proto-Scandinavian basis	Modern Norwegian	English
<i>gráiva, grábja</i>		<i>grev</i>	hoe
<i>dáddi</i>		<i>tad, gjødsel</i>	manure, fertilizer
<i>sadjit</i>		<i>å så</i>	to sow
<i>áksi</i>		<i>aks</i>	ear (of grain)
<i>giertnas</i>	<i>*kwernuz</i>	<i>kvern</i>	mill
<i>ráktsa</i>	<i>*grautaz</i>	<i>grøt</i>	porridge
<i>áhkar</i>		<i>aker</i>	field
<i>gordni</i>	<i>*kurna</i>	<i>korn</i>	grain, corn

¹³¹ Storli 1991, 1994.

¹³² Nesheim 1958.

Table 1 (*cont.*)

Sámi	Assumed Proto- Scandinavian basis	Modern Norwegian	English
<i>rievdni</i>	<i>*daiga</i>	<i>gryn</i>	(hulled) grain
<i>dáigi</i>		<i>deig</i>	dough
<i>fieksi</i>	(Old Norw. <i>skjola</i>)	<i>fjøs</i>	cow barn, cowshed
<i>buvvi</i>		<i>buskap, bufe</i>	cattle, livestock
<i>skiellu</i>		<i>melkebøtte</i>	milk pail

Previously, scholars used to regard linguistic influence as a direct manifestation of cultural superiority and that the Sámi had thus adopted husbandry and agriculture under Scandinavian influence. Although this hypothesis certainly cannot be excluded, it is no longer considered to be the only possibility. The loan of Scandinavian terminology could just as well have been part of Sámi interactional strategies that aimed at borrowing certain terms in order to establish a certain level of commonality and to express solidarity with peoples with whom they interacted. Such adoption of linguistic expressions and cultural traits is evident in many parts of the world in societies that have mutual exchange and interaction, and especially in contacts between hunter-gatherer societies and agricultural societies. Something similar may well have occurred in the relationship between Norse and Sámi groups in Nordland and Troms.¹³³

Conversely, the Norwegian word *rev* (fox) can be seen as a likely expression of linguistic influence in the other direction. This term, which played a crucial role in the fur trade, was probably borrowed by the Scandinavian languages from Finno-Ugric. Since the word *rev* recurs in all Scandinavian languages, whereas other northern Germanic languages have formed corresponding terms from the stem *fúhsa-* (m.), giving *Fuchs* in German and 'fox' in English, it seems to have been borrowed at an early stage. In Sámi, the animal is called a *rieban* (North Sámi) or *riepie* (South Sámi), and the Finno-Ugric stem *repäš* forms the basis of the word in all Balto-Finnic and Volga-Finnic languages.¹³⁴ The term *kettu* was later introduced to Finnish as the usual term for 'fox,' although the form *repo* is known from traditional usage, such as fairy tales and traditional songs.¹³⁵ The Finno-Ugric

¹³³ Odner 1983, 54–56, 66; Schanche 1986, 131–132.

¹³⁴ Bergsland 1965; Lytkin 1974.

¹³⁵ In Finnish, the word *kettu* has undergone a shift in meaning from signifying animal furs in general to the animal 'fox' specifically. This probably reflects the significance of fox pelts as a commodity (Kulonen and Itkonen 1992, 349).

stem, when borrowed by proto-Scandinavian, was reproduced with *rebaR*, a form that with regular sound change gives *refr* in Norse.¹³⁶ Alternatively, attempts have been made to construct purely Nordic etymologies, partly on the basis of an assumed comparison with *rav* (amber), which would lead to the result 'red-brown' in a figurative sense, and partly by comparing with the word *rove* in the sense 'backside' or 'tail'.¹³⁷ In culture-historical terms, these attempts, which assume that the similarity with the Finno-Ugric form was coincidental, are hardly more plausible than assuming that fur trading in prehistoric times resulted in borrowing.

In any case, the contact in some regions between the Sámi and Norse communities seems to have reached a high degree of institutionalization during the Early Iron Age and the Viking Age. In the inner fjord areas of southern Troms, the Norsemen named a number of parallel localities *Laberg* (loading rock, loading place). These places have been interpreted as permanent organized meeting places or 'emporia' for furs in connection with the organized contact between the Sámi in this area and representatives of the nearby chieftaincy on Bjarkøy/Trondenes.¹³⁸ It is possible that renewed and intensified European demand for furs resulted in a more permanent organization and a higher degree of institutionalization in the western fur trade. This intensified demand may have been communicated to the Sámi communities and resulted in the Sámi specializing further as hunters of fur-bearing animals in order to meet trading demands and pay the taxes levied by the chieftains.

What can the archaeological material tell us about this increased specialization and intensification of hunting? In order to answer this, we are going to cross the border to Sweden and look at the situation in that context.

3.6 SETTLEMENT AND ECONOMY IN THE INTERIOR

During the last 1500 years BC, an economic specialization occurred among the hunter-gatherer communities in the inner and northern parts of the Swedish Norrland region. A relatively fixed settlement pattern based on the intensive exploitation of moose was replaced by more mobile settlement in which reindeer hunting attained greater significance. Under

¹³⁶ Bergsland 1965; Bjorvand and Lindeman 2000.

¹³⁷ Nielsen 1966; Falk and Torp 1903–1906.

¹³⁸ Hansen 1990b, 164–170.

this new migration pattern, the winter dwelling places lay in the boreal forest region and the summer dwelling places in the lower-lying mountain areas. The higher, treeless mountain region was not usually part of the hunting area.¹³⁹

This pattern appears to persist until around AD 500–600 and reindeer hunting during this period remained limited to the forests and lower-lying mountain areas. Yet, there is a change in hunting, which became intensified by means of an increase in the number and the size of pitfall systems. Several of these were built near the tree line and higher up in the river valleys. At the same time, a new type of dwelling came into being in the form of ‘forest houses,’ often found together with sunken ovens connected to the pitfall systems. These sites have been interpreted as traces of lightweight turf huts or tents, which were used during the wild reindeer-hunting season in the autumn or summer. They are widely spread out and may have been home to hunting parties of two to four individuals.¹⁴⁰

The exploitation of various ecological zones in northern Sweden intensified during the Iron Age, with a gradually more restrictive territorial organization. Large, loosely-defined territories were replaced by smaller, more clearly-defined hunting areas. This territorial restructuring probably formed an important basis for the division of the Sámi area into *siida* territories.¹⁴¹ During the Late Iron Age (from AD 700–800), according to Mulk, changes also seem to have occurred in the way hunting was organized, with larger hunting parties and a need for more far-reaching, collective organization. Evidence of this change in the Early Iron Age is that the treeless, high-mountain plateau areas begin to be used. In archaeological terms, this expansion is indicated by turf hut sites, storage and cooking pits in the high-mountain plateaus. The interpretations of this expansion vary, however, and several scholars have suggested that this phenomenon must rather be seen in connection with a new reindeer economy involving domesticated herds.

3.6.1 *Hunters or Herders: the ‘Stallo’ Sites*

One focus of this debate has been the interpretation of a special type of house sites found along the northern Norwegian-Swedish mountain ridge (Kjølen). They are situated above the tree line, between 550 and 850 m

¹³⁹ Forsberg 1985, 1988; Bergman 1994.

¹⁴⁰ Mulk 1994.

¹⁴¹ See Vorren 1978a.

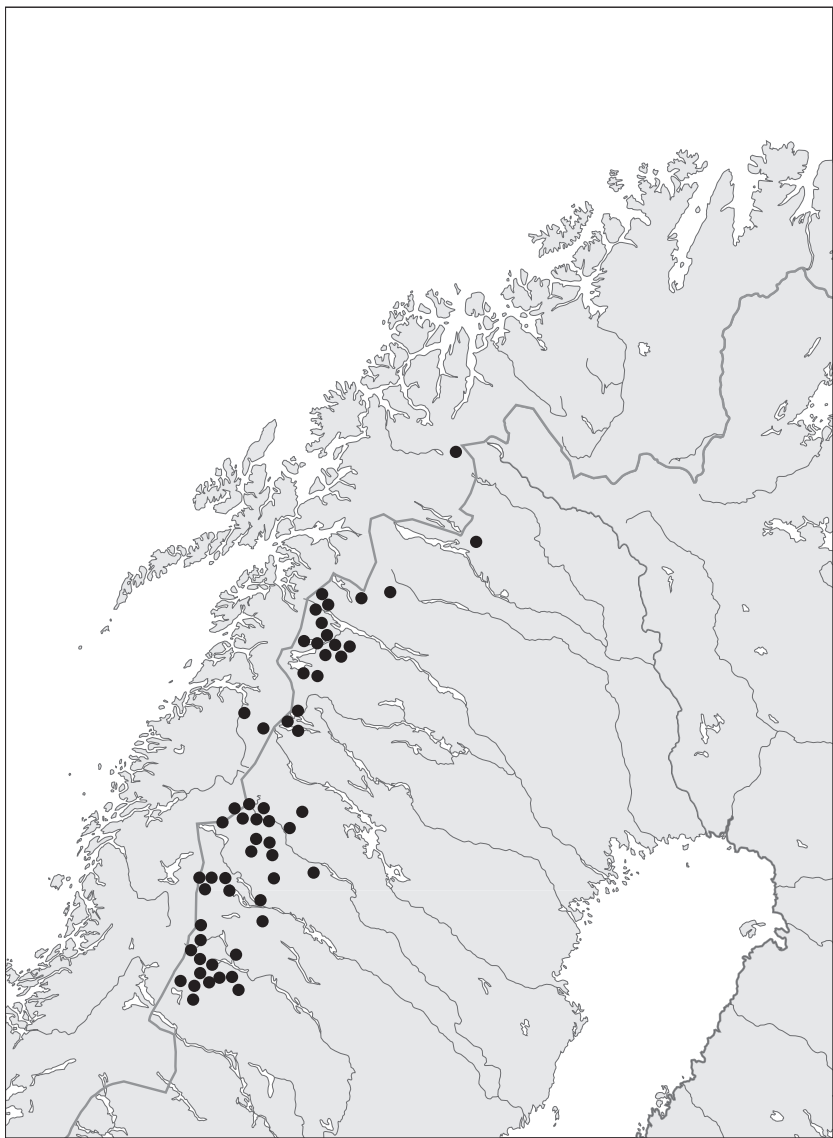


Fig. 14. The distribution of known stallo sites in Norway and Sweden. (From Mulk 1995, supplemented with records from Sommerseth 2009.)

above sea level, in an area stretching from the Devddesvuopmi, Troms county, in the north to Frostviken, Jämtland county, in the south.¹⁴² The house foundations visible at these sites are round or oval in shape; the floor area, measuring 4 to 6 m in diameter, is partly sunken and enclosed by a distinct wall. The sites contain two to fifteen houses (albeit rarely more than eight) organized in a linear pattern. The most intensive phase of use of these house sites seems to have been the period AD 800–1050, in other words, the Viking Age.¹⁴³

The sites have been traditionally referred to as ‘Stallo’ sites in the literature. This designation has its origins in a local Sámi tradition in the southern part of the Sámi settlement area in Sweden. The Sámi here called the house sites ‘Stallo’—or *jehna* (giant) sites, and legends and notions were associated with them in that they were supposed to have been sites or graves left by others than the Sámi in the area.¹⁴⁴ The designation was later adopted by the Swedish ethnologist Ernst Manker in his extensive documentary work published in 1960, *Fångstgropar och stalotomter* (Hunting Pits and Stallo Sites).¹⁴⁵

As mentioned previously, these sites have given rise to intense debate among researchers. The main questions have involved to whom or with which ethnic group they should be associated and what sort of economic adaptation they represented. Three main interpretations have been suggested:

- 1) The sites were used for hunting activities by a Norse/Norwegian population living along the coast of northern Norway.¹⁴⁶
- 2) The sites were used by Sámi as summer and autumn settlements in connection with wild reindeer hunting. During the winter, they either lived in the forested area on the Swedish side¹⁴⁷ or in the fjords and along the coast to the west.¹⁴⁸
- 3) The sites were used by the Sámi not for hunting purposes but in connection with early reindeer pastoralism, either reflecting a use of

¹⁴² Mulk 1994; Storli 1994; Liedgren et al. 2007; Bergman et al. 2008; Liedgren and Bergman 2009; Sommerseth 2009.

¹⁴³ Liedgren et al. 2007, 1287.

¹⁴⁴ Mebius 2008, 33–46.

¹⁴⁵ Manker 1960.

¹⁴⁶ Kjellström 1983.

¹⁴⁷ Mulk 1994.

¹⁴⁸ Baudou 1981; Hansen 1990b.

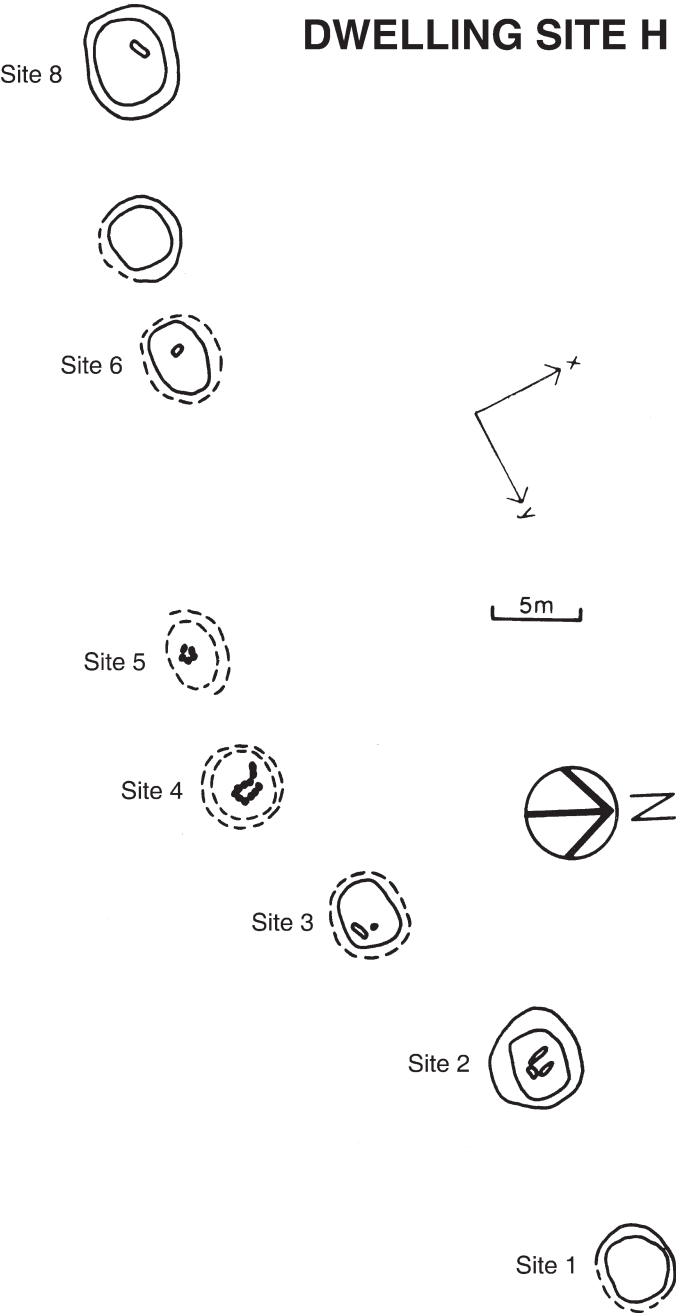


Fig. 15. The stallo houses are often organized in rows, as illustrated by this site map from the investigations in Lønsdalen, Saltfjellet (from Storli 1994).

the mountain area for summer pasture¹⁴⁹ or for more stationary reindeer herding.¹⁵⁰

Based on archaeological investigation of Stallo house sites in Lønsdalen, Saltfjellet, Norway, Inger Storli argued that the new utilization of the mountain region must be seen in connection with the transition to domestic reindeer herding. Such use of the high-mountain plateau areas corresponds with the migration patterns we find among Swedish reindeer-herding Sámi in recent centuries. They used the mountain region for summer pasture, and, according to Storli, the location of the Stallo sites in the same region may be explained by them representing a new herding economy where the need for reindeer pasture had become a critical factor for settlement and seasonal movements. Apart from the change in the settlement pattern, her reasoning is linked to arguments concerning gender and the organization of domestic space.

Excavations indicate that the spatial division of the floor area of the Stallo houses share features with those known from the organization of the later Sámi turf hut and tent. Storli argues that the way Sámi domestic space traditionally was organized, separating male from female areas, is specific to the gender roles characterizing the Sámi reindeer herding culture. If the Stallo sites had been specialized hunting sites, the presence of women would moreover have been undesirable because of Sámi taboos regarding women and hunting. At reindeer-herding sites, however, women had an important role to play, such as milking the reindeer. The fact that the material from the Stallo sites also contains artifacts suggesting the presence of women (for example, a spinning wheel) is thus taken as support of these being pastoral settlements.¹⁵¹

THE TURF HUT AS MICROCOSM: LAYING OUT THE 'GOAHTI'

The essential features of Sámi cosmology appear to have been manifested in the way the turf hut or tent was spatially organized. In this way, the social and religious aspects of pre-Christian Sámi society acquired a concrete form of expression and undoubtedly played an important role in the way new generations was socialized into the Sámi life-world. The turf hut became a sort of microcosm, a condensed expression of the universe's multiplicity of contexts and partitions.

¹⁴⁹ Storli 1993, 1994.

¹⁵⁰ Bergman et al. 2008; Liedgren and Bergman 2009.

¹⁵¹ Storli 1994, 64–70.

Swedish ethnologist Gustav Ränk has shown how numerous features of the division of Sámi domestic space were related to social and religious affairs. The traditional round turf hut and tent are characterized by the special partitioning of the floor area. In the middle of the circular room was the hearth (*árran*). The central position of the hearth, which provides light and heat within the turf hut, can be interpreted as a reflection of the sun's central, life-giving function within the universe. From the main entrance/front door, two rows of stones (or two logs) led towards the hearth. On the opposite side were corresponding rows of stones or logs, which led to the rear entrance. This characteristic division of the turf hut floor can be identified in houses on the coast of Finnmark dating as far back as about 2,000 years ago.

The area between the hearth and the rear entrance, called *boaššu*, was considered sacred. The drum and hunting weapons were kept in this part and, as with slaughtered game, had to be brought in and out of the back door. This entrance was heavily tabooed, and only men were allowed to use it or move about in the *boaššu* space. A sizable stone associated with the rear end of the hearth (the *boaššu* stone) often marked the spot where the *boaššu* began. Dairy products and the products of domestic animal husbandry were brought in through the front door and were not allowed to come in contact with the sacred rear area.

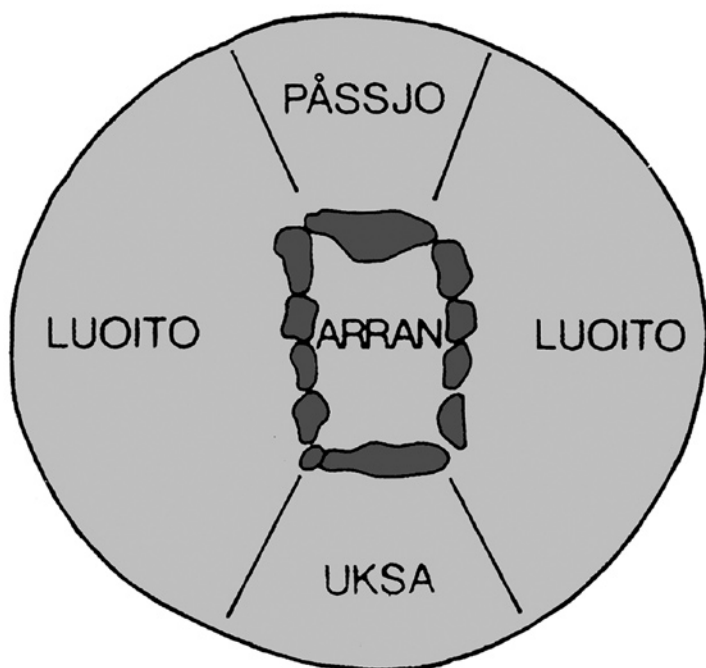


Fig. A. Floor plan showing the division of space in the turf hut/tent used by one family (after Ränk 1949).

If the turf hut was home to only one family, the mother and father each had their own living and sleeping places, to the right and left of the hearth, respectively. Further towards the door, the children, then possible guests, and finally the servants, had their places. These principles were, nonetheless, not absolute. If, for example, the turf hut was inhabited by more than one household, the divisions for the various members of the families would be different. The spatial differences inside the dwelling represented (and articulated) not merely a number of basic, complementary gender dualities, and various functions associated with hunting and death on the one hand and life-giving faculties on the other; they also made manifest more mundane distinctions, such as those between the family's own members and the household's hired hands.

The vertical extent of the turf hut/tent can also be perceived as an articulation of the scope of the cosmos, with its axis passing through the hearth and the smoke vent as an image of the world pole with the North Star as its heavenly terminus. At the same time, the three female divinities resided beneath the floor of the turf hut: *Sáráhkká* under the hearth, *Uksáhkká* under the front door and *Juksáhkká* beneath the *boaššu* at the rear.

Because the world order itself is manifested at a everyday, residential level, so to speak, it also becomes linked with the cyclical, periodic migration which long characterized the Sámi way of life. While the cosmos often appears to be more or less stable in agriculture-based cultures, the Sámi perception of the cosmos was affected by their mobile and seasonal way of life. Due to the way that the dwelling was organized, the world was constantly reestablished at each dwelling place in the migratory cycle—possibly each time a tent was put up or a turf hut built. The center of the universe was established anew every time so to speak, or operated with several centers.^b

Storli made a connection between the Stallo sites in the high-mountain plateau region and contemporary hearth row sites occurring in the Swedish forest region.¹⁵² The latter sites consist of large rectangular hearths (normally 4 to 8 hearths) organized in a conspicuous linear pattern. The corresponding dating and spatial organization made Storli suggest that they represented different seasonal sites used by the same reindeer-herding communities. With reference to the historical pattern of pastoral seasonal movements based on migrations between the forest (winter) and the high-mountain plateau (summer), the hearths are considered to be traces of the pastoralists' winter settlements.¹⁵³ Hearth row sites similar to those found in the northern Swedish forest region are numerous through-

^b Ränk 1949; Rydving 1993; Yates 1989.

¹⁵² Bergman 1988, 1991; Hedman 2003.

¹⁵³ Storli 1994, 51–61.

out much of the interior of northern Fennoscandia (see fig. 14).¹⁵⁴ More remarkable is a recent find of a hearth row site at Aursjøen, Lesja, Norway, which suggests that their distribution may even have included the mountain areas of southern Norway.¹⁵⁵ With reference to Storli's interpretation, these could indicate geographically far more extensive economic changes in the Sámi area than that indicated by the Stallo sites in isolation.

One aspect of Storli's interpretation that is questionable relates to the assumed differences in the conception of gender between hunting and pastoral communities. For example, the organization of dwelling space that she associates with pastoral gender roles is actually far more clearly articulated in Early Iron Age dwellings excavated on the coast of Finnmark.¹⁵⁶ There does not appear to be evidence, either, that women were not allowed to be present at a hunting dwelling place—which did not necessarily indicate participation in the hunt itself. Mulk has actually argued that the intensification of hunting during this period demanded greater participation on the part of women.¹⁵⁷

Storli may be right that the Stallo house sites and the hearth row sites represent different stations in a seasonal settlement pattern stretching from the mountains to the boreal forest area in the east. However, there are other and possibly more likely options. The Stallo sites may also have been used by Sámi from the fjord areas along the Norwegian coast.¹⁵⁸ The analysis of skeletal remains from a late eleventh-early twelfth-century grave of a Sámi woman in the high-mountain plateau region Aravuobma (Áravuopma) near Torneträsk,¹⁵⁹ Sweden, may suggest this. The analysis of ¹³C content indicates that the woman's diet must have consisted of a substantial proportion of marine food—natural for someone who migrated between the coast to the west and the high-mountain plateau area.¹⁶⁰ Although it is impossible to assert any direct connection with the contemporary Stallo house sites in the area, it suggests the possibility that they may have belonged to Sámi who spent the winter on the west side of the mountain ridge. This hypothesis also questions the recently proposed

¹⁵⁴ Simonsen 1979, 1997; Hamari 1996; Simonsen 1997; Carpelan 2001, 294–295; Hedman 2003; Hedman and Olsen 2009.

¹⁵⁵ Bergstøl 2008, 141–142.

¹⁵⁶ Olsen 1993; Hesjedal et al. 1996; Myrvoll 2011.

¹⁵⁷ Mulk 1994, 244.

¹⁵⁸ Hansen 1990b.

¹⁵⁹ Mulk et al. 1993.

¹⁶⁰ Schanche 2000, 225–26.



Fig. 16. Hearth row site being excavated at Brodtkorpneset, Pasvik, Finnmark. The site dates to the early Middle Ages (Photo: Bjørnar Olsen)

suggestion that the Stallo house sites represent a permanent and sedentary presence of pastoral Sámi groups in the high-mountain zone.¹⁶¹

There seems to be no doubt that a change in settlement patterns occurred in the Late Iron Age. This change is also reflected in the location of hearth row sites. While earlier interior sites are most often found along the shores of lakes and larger rivers, the hearth row sites normally appear in the forest areas away from the major water sheds.¹⁶² Seen together with the Stallo house sites, this suggests that a change in location preferences

¹⁶¹ Bergman et al. 2008, 98, 104–108; Liedgren and Bergman 2009; see also Sommerseth 2009, 240–246.

¹⁶² Hedman 2003; Hedman and Olsen 2009.

and settlement organization took place during the Viking Age. However, why this change occurred remains to be explained. Did it reflect changes within a hunting-based economy, or were the new patterns caused by a transition to reindeer herding?

On the one hand, there is a marked increase in the find of hunting weapons from the Viking Age and Early Middle Ages, in particular iron arrowheads, in the interior of northern Fennoscandia.¹⁶³ This can be explained by greater economic specialization in certain resources, reindeer in particular, but likely also small game. Again, this is probably due to increased trade and the European demand for furs. This demand may have caused a dearth of strategic resources, expansion into new areas, as well as the need for a clearer definition of territorial organization. The increased formalization of settlement design throughout much of the interior of northern Fennoscandia, in the form of linearly-organized house sites and hearths, could be an indication of a more distinct expression of territorial rights.¹⁶⁴

On the other hand, very few of these hunting weapons are found at the Stallo house sites, and although a much larger number have been found at the hearth row sites,¹⁶⁵ the majority stems from the large sacrificial sites (the so-called 'metal depots,' see below) in northern Sweden.¹⁶⁶ In fact, the Stallo houses are remarkably poor in finds, and although very few extensive excavations have been carried out, this scarcity of finds in the houses themselves may indicate summer habitation when most activity took place outdoors. Unfortunately, excavations outside and between the house foundations which could have identified such outdoor activity areas have not been conducted. The new location preferences, both as represented by the Stallo sites and the hearth row sites, may indicate the different needs of a pastoral economy especially in relation to seasonal access to pasture.¹⁶⁷ 'Bone depots', the custom among reindeer herders to place bones from daily meals in hideouts, are sometimes found close to the sites. Most datings are later, but some depots, albeit not in direct association with Stallo sites, have yielded dates as far back as the Viking Age.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶³ Serning 1956; Zachrisson 1984, 1997; Sommerseth 2009.

¹⁶⁴ Storli 1993, 5; Hedman and Olsen 2009.

¹⁶⁵ Simonsen 1979; Hedman 2003; Hedman and Olsen 2009.

¹⁶⁶ Serning 1956; see also below.

¹⁶⁷ Andersen 2002, 2005; Hedman 2005.

¹⁶⁸ Andersen 2005, 2011.

We should thus be careful about entirely rejecting Storli's hypothesis of reindeer herding by the Sámi as early as the Viking Age.¹⁶⁹ The problem is rather the extent and nature of this reindeer herding, and its social and economic consequences (see chap. 4).¹⁷⁰ Much earlier, the Sámi who otherwise made their living from hunting and trapping, had kept a small number of reindeer as draught animals and for use as decoys for hunting wild reindeer. In his account, Othere only explicitly mentions decoy reindeer as the kind of domesticated reindeer kept by the Sámi. In the *Historia Norvegiæ* (ca. 1150), the Sámi are unmistakably described as hunters and trappers, but who also use reindeer as draught animals. In this case, decoy, pack, or draught reindeer must still be regarded as technology in a society based on hunting and not as a subsistence-economic or social resource.

There could, however, have been phases in history when decoy or draught reindeer, which were kept almost as domestic animals, in themselves became a potential resource e.g., calves for slaughter, skins, and antlers, and of course dairy products. This activity can be defined as a kind of reindeer herding, even though in sociological terms, the society has to be defined as a hunter-gatherer society.¹⁷¹ It may have been this kind of domesticated reindeer that are mentioned in a skaldic lay from the latter half of the tenth century, which describes famine and destitution on Hålogaland. The lay is attributed to Øyvind Skaldespiller, who hailed from Sandnes in Helgeland:

Snýr á Svolnis vóru, svá hofum inn sem Finnar birki hind of bundit brums, at miðju sumri. ¹⁷²	It is snowing on the ground as Finns we have bound in the birch buds' hind in the middle of the summer.
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This lay has been interpreted as indicating that the Sámi along the coast kept sheep and goats in the Early Middle Ages. The original text, however, uses the word *hind*, which means 'female deer' in both Old Norse and a number of related tongues. The stanza is in no way an unambiguous reference to animal husbandry or the keeping of sheep and goats. Given the external physical similarity between deer and reindeer, it is therefore

¹⁶⁹ See also Aronsson 1991; Andersen 2002.

¹⁷⁰ Ingold 1980; Olsen 1987.

¹⁷¹ Ingold 1980; Olsen 1984, 229–236; 1987.

¹⁷² Cited in Snorri Sturluson, publ. by F. Jónsson 1911, 103, authors' translation; cf. Snorri Sturluson: *Heimskringla*, transl. by Lee M. Hollander 2005, 142.

reasonable to believe that the skald did in fact mean reindeer. It might seem odd that the reindeer could be fed with birch buds and shoots, but in periods when pasture is difficult to find—as it is in spring and early summer—reindeer could actually eat these plants.¹⁷³ Based on both the actual circumstances and the poetic context in which the word *hind* is found, it could just as well be regarded as an image of Sámi reindeer herding as other forms of animal husbandry. If this interpretation is correct, it points to a method of management in which the reindeer was genuinely tame and closely related to the household on par with other domestic animals. It should, however, be mentioned that bones of sheep (sheep/goat) are found in an Early Medieval context (late eleventh or early twelfth century) at the hearth row site Brodtkorbneset in Pasvik, Finnmark (see fig. 16). The bones stem from both the meat rich and less meat rich parts of the body, indicating that the animals were kept and slaughtered at the site.¹⁷⁴

3.7 HUNTER-GATHERER SETTLEMENTS IN THE SOUTH SÁMI AREA

From the Roman Era onwards, sedentary settlements were established on the periphery of today's Sámi area, which were based on agriculture and bog iron production. This was the case for central Jämtland, Medelpad in Sweden, and the interior of Trøndelag in Norway. These villages constituted part of the Germanic Iron Age culture in Scandinavia. Towards the end of the Iron Age, this settlement expanded to Härjedalen and the mountainous regions of Jämtland.¹⁷⁵

However, as early as the pre-Roman Iron Age, more precisely ca. 200 BC, we find traces of another type of Iron Age settlement in and around the southern Sámi areas of today, in the form of graves in outlying areas—by lakes, in the forests, and eventually also in the mountainous areas. In Sweden, these graves are referred to both as lake and forest graves, while in Norway they are called mountain graves. There is every indication that these constitute a related phenomenon (albeit with chronological and morphological variations) occurring in different types of terrain.¹⁷⁶ For this reason, a generic term has been proposed for them: hunting-ground graves

¹⁷³ Brudeli 1959, 39; Skjenneberg 1965, 60–76.

¹⁷⁴ Hedman and Olsen 2009.

¹⁷⁵ Sundström 1997, 21.

¹⁷⁶ Bergstøl 1997, 86.

(*fangstmarksgraver*).¹⁷⁷ The oldest graves (ca. 200 BC–600 AD) usually occur on the south-facing headlands of lakes and take the form of triangular or circular stone formations. They often lie in larger or smaller groups and are known with certainty from Härjedalen, Dalarna, and Gästrikland.¹⁷⁸ At the well-known burial site at Krankmårtenhögen by the lake Storsjön in Härjedalen, dated to between 200 BC–200 AD, the antlers of moose and reindeer were deposited in many of the approximately thirty stone formations, possibly as sacrifices. The richest grave, that of a man, contained the antlers of twelve moose and four reindeer.¹⁷⁹

The later graves (after ca. 600) are less clearly defined in terms of form, and they are also found in mountainous regions of Trøndelag, Hedmark, Jämtland, and Härjedalen.¹⁸⁰ As is the case with the northern mountain region discussed in connection with the Stallo sites, there seems to have been an intensification of the utilization of the mountain region in the Late Iron Age.¹⁸¹ This is indicated too by an increase in the number of stray finds in the mountain region.¹⁸² The graves from this more recent phase usually consist of low cairns or mounds lying individually or in small groups, although flat graves have also been found. Most of the graves on the Norwegian side of the border have been dated to the Late Iron Age, with the main emphasis on the Viking Age.¹⁸³ So far, only one of these graves can be dated to the medieval period with certainty.¹⁸⁴ In Sweden, however, they are known to have been used until as late as the thirteenth century, exemplified by the well-known—albeit from the point of view of hunting-ground graves somewhat atypical—burial site at Vivalen in Härjedalen. The equipment naturally varies to a considerable degree but often consists of iron arrowheads and other tools associated with hunting. The graves show similarities with contemporary Germanic graves, although the different combinations of finds, the absence of some types of objects, as well as morphological dissimilarities mean that these graves stand out all the same and often appear to be ‘mixed’.¹⁸⁵ This fact

¹⁷⁷ Gollwitzer 1997, 33.

¹⁷⁸ Baudou 1978.

¹⁷⁹ Ambrosiani et al. 1984; Zachrisson 1997, 199.

¹⁸⁰ Bergstøl 2008.

¹⁸¹ See also Mikkelsen 1994.

¹⁸² Sundström 1997; Gollwitzer 1997.

¹⁸³ Skjølsvold 1980; Bergstøl 2008.

¹⁸⁴ Bergstøl 2008, 216–217.

¹⁸⁵ Håkansson 1995; Zachrisson 1997, 218.

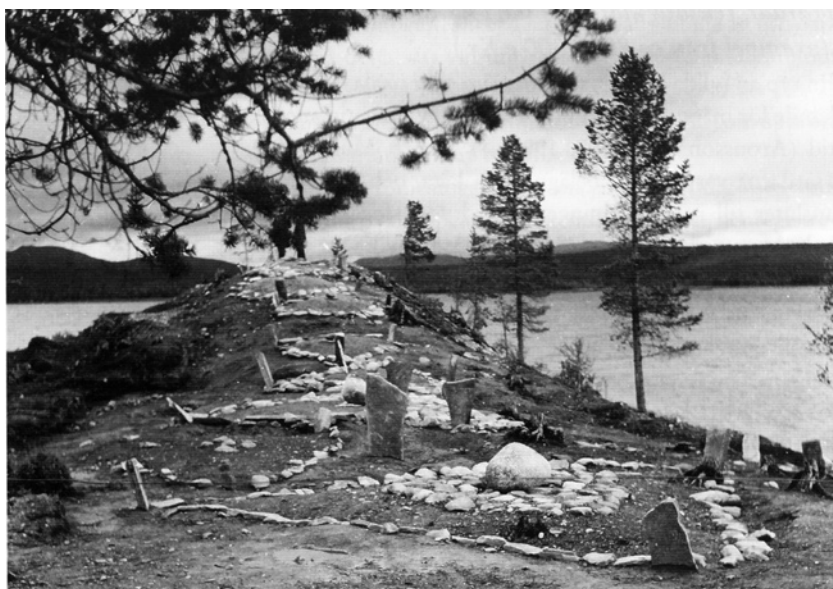


Fig. 17. The burial site Krankmårtenhögen at Storsjön, Härjedalen (from Zachrisson 1997, photo: Göran Stolpe.)

can be seen particularly clearly in the rich material from the grave site at VivalLEN.¹⁸⁶

As mentioned previously, the graves lie outside the agricultural villages in a typical hunting environment. The lakeside graves in particular lie in the same areas as the hunting sites of the Stone Age and early Metal Age. However, there are relatively few traces of settlement in these areas that can be dated to the same period as the graves. Those traces, which have been gradually discovered, are in the form of hearths in earlier dwelling places.¹⁸⁷ However, two hearths in the vicinity of the VivalLEN burial site dating from the Viking Age/Early Middle Ages have been examined, both with unburned reindeer bones. They were probably located within turf huts, and, in connection with one of them, stone formations were found reminiscent of the characteristic division of the floor space in the Sámi turf hut.¹⁸⁸ A large settlement area has also been explored near Sösjön in Njaarkeh (Njaarke) Sameby (Sámi village) in Jämtland with a number of

¹⁸⁶ Zachrisson 1997, 61–76.

¹⁸⁷ Sundström 1997, 25.

¹⁸⁸ Zachrisson 1997, 117–118.

hearths, cooking pits, and reindeer corrals. The finds from this location, the oldest of which may date back to the eleventh century, could give us a new picture of settlement in, and the economy of, this part of the South Sámi region.¹⁸⁹

3.7.1 *Sámi or Germanic?*

The cultural and ethnic identity of these hunting-ground graves in the South Sámi region has long been debated.¹⁹⁰ With the exception of the rather peculiar burial site at Vivalen, which most consider to be Sámi, there has been a reluctance to associate the graves with the Sámi. Evert Baudou sees them as traces of Germanic settlement, and Knut Odner has put forward a similar view.¹⁹¹ Odner asserts that the interior settlement had its roots in an earlier hunting culture, but due to the changes that took place at the beginning of the Iron Age, people chose to adopt Germanic identity, similar to what the northern coastal population did (see chapter 2.5). Other scholars have seen them as traces of a population that, by means of its economic adaptation, was different from the agricultural societies, but these authors have discussed ethnic affiliations to a lesser degree.¹⁹²

Some researchers have, however, associated these graves with Sámi ethnicity, referring to a number of features, such as linguistic and genetic indications, the location of the graves and the geographic continuity in relation to the older hunting culture, as well as the material characteristics of the graves themselves which contrast with contemporary Germanic graves as a whole.¹⁹³ Also emphasized are for example the fact that place names and local traditions in Jämtland and Härjedalen link the Sámi with the graves.¹⁹⁴

In our understanding, certain aspects of these graves distinguish them from what we find in contemporary Germanic environments in Scandinavia. The characteristic Germanic/Norse ornaments from the Early and Late Iron Ages, which are otherwise important signals of cultural identity, are mainly absent. On the other hand, penannular brooches

¹⁸⁹ Aronsson 2005.

¹⁹⁰ Among others, see Hallström 1931; Serning 1966; Skjølsvold 1980; Odner 1983; Selinge 1983; Baudou 1986, 1988; Liedgren 1988; Hyenstrand 1987; Zachrisson 1988, 1992, 1997.

¹⁹¹ Baudou 1986, 1988; Odner 1983, 111–113.

¹⁹² Skjølsvold 1980; Selinge 1979.

¹⁹³ Zachrisson 1997; see also Hyenstrand 1987; Ambrosiani et al. 1984.

¹⁹⁴ Zachrisson 1988, 29.

of the eastern type from the Viking Age and Early Middle Ages are more often found in lakeside graves, objects which in other contexts have been interpreted as Sámi.¹⁹⁵ The presence of a South Sámi population in the same area in more recent times, a number of place names which indicate Sámi settlement, as well as stray finds of Sámi or 'eastern' character from the Viking Age onwards, can also be cited in support of identification of the graves as Sámi.

Whether all these graves from the entire period can be defined as Sámi is, of course, debatable. As previously mentioned, there may have been considerable regional variation during the Iron Age as to what form the hunter-gatherer identity took, and this may in part account for the cultural variation that can be observed within the Sámi settlement area in later periods. The articulation of the cultural and ethnic boundaries in relation to the surrounding population could also have varied, and it is likely that hunting-ground graves are an example of this.¹⁹⁶ It seems certain that the graves originated in a hunting environment; they actually occur earlier than the first traces of agricultural settlement in the neighboring valleys. If these burials relate to a continuous hunter-gatherer settlement throughout the Iron Age and Early Middle Ages, it is also reasonable to assume that these hunters maintained close social and economic ties with the surrounding Germanic societies, in which exchange of hunting products was central. This trade may have been organized on an ethnic basis, although not necessarily according to the same pattern as further north.

It is therefore possible to regard the lakeside/mountain graves as a manifestation of the fact that ethnic relationships in middle Scandinavia in the Iron Age and Early Middle Ages produced its own unique cultural forms of expression. The mixed character of the graves and grave finds is evidence of a certain degree of cultural 'creolization.' An illustrative example of this is the complex grave find from Verdal in North Trøndelag county from the tenth century.¹⁹⁷ In addition to Norse ornaments, it contained three cruciform pendants as well as a bronze ring, from which hang five trapezoid-shaped bronze plates similar to those known from Sámi sacrificial site finds. This cultural mixing is also revealed in other objects, such as the well-known drum hammer from Øvre Rendalen in Hedmark, dated to AD 1160–1260.¹⁹⁸ This hammer is remarkable because it has both Sámi

¹⁹⁵ Zachrisson 1997, 207; compare with Reymert 1980; Storli 1991.

¹⁹⁶ Bergstøl 1997, 86.

¹⁹⁷ Gjessing 1928, 36.

¹⁹⁸ Pareli 1991.

and Norse type ornamentation. In fact, the style manifestations appear each on their own side of the drum hammer.

These hybrid manifestations can be understood against the background of the specific relationships of the hunter-gatherers in the south. Surrounded as they were by a demographically far more dominant Norse population than in the North, they may have felt obliged to adopt Norse cultural traits. By including these in new contexts and in combination with their own and eastern forms of expression, they created a genuine cultural repertoire. In phases and in certain areas, this could have manifested in the formation of identities that were not only different from the Germanic, but also from manifestations of Sámi identity further north. At the same time, it needs to be emphasized that neither in the north were identities formed purely according to a dual Norse-Sámi mode. As recent studies of burials and hoards have suggested, there may have been groups and persons that lived in-between the two cultures and based their identities and interactions on transcending the 'normal' ethnic categories.¹⁹⁹

This fact notwithstanding, the available archaeological data, written sources, and place names are today sufficient to question the canonized image of southern Norway and central Sweden as a homogenous Norse settlement area during the Iron Age and Early Middle Ages. In addition to the archaeological finds already mentioned, there is a striking occurrence of eastern penannular brooches of the Karelian and Baltic Sea type in eastern Norway. These are similar to the ones we have mentioned previously from northern Norway, which have been identified as Sámi.²⁰⁰ Moreover, the extent to which the sagas mention (or state the presence of) 'Finns' in areas far outside what is traditionally assumed to have been the Sámi settlement area is remarkable. In the *Saga of Harald Fairhair*, we meet Svåse, King of the Finns, who has a turf hut not far from the king's estate at Dovre. In the *Saga of Halvdan the Black*, the Sámi are referred to in the form of a Finn skilled in sorcery in connection with a Christmas feast at Hadeland.

Early Christian laws also provide a strong argument in favor of Sámi presence in eastern Norway. These were implemented immediately after the Christianization of Norway and were probably written down before 1120. It is intriguing that the two provincial laws that explicitly mention

¹⁹⁹ Spangen 2005; Bruun 2007.

²⁰⁰ Gjessing 1928; Storli 1991; L. Olsen 1998: 87; Bergstøl 1998; Bergstøl, personal communication; Gjerde 2010.

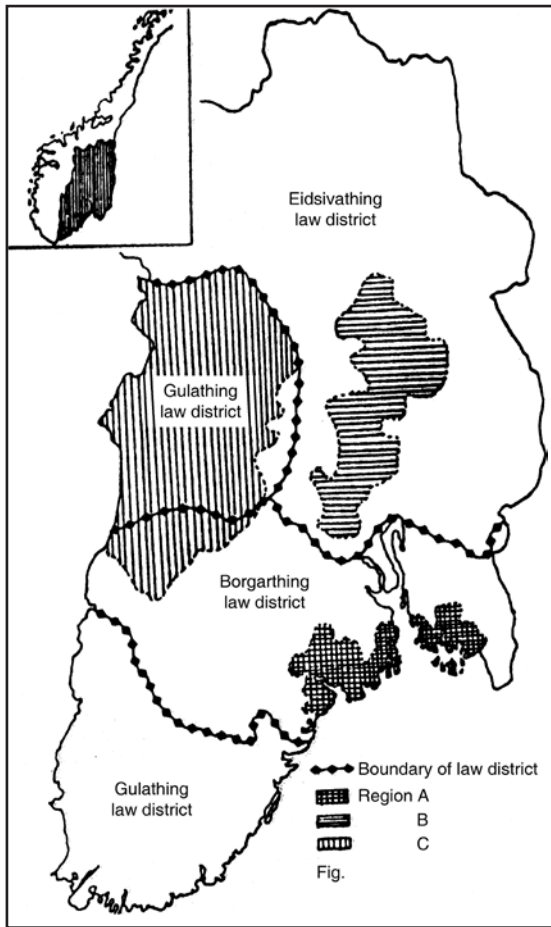


Fig. 18. Map of East Norwegian law districts in the early Middle Ages.

the Sámi are the laws of the Eidsivathing and the Borgarthing, covering southeastern Norway.²⁰¹ These contain a total of five entries involving the Sámi, all of which relate to a ban on going to the Sámi to have one's fortune told or otherwise seeking assistance through Sámi magic. This fact can be regarded as confirmation that magical connections were an important part of interethnic contacts in the time before Christianity gained a foothold in Norse society. It also tells us something, however, about the extent of the Sámi settlement area in the Viking Age and Early Middle

²⁰¹ Olsen, L. 1998, 119–120.

Ages: if the Sámi had not lived in southeastern Norway, why should these provincial laws forbid people from seeking them out? It is precisely the obviousness with which these sources and the sagas mentioned the Sámi in this part of Norway that gives us reason to believe that this was a perfectly normal phenomenon. Similar indications are provided by the place name material, in particular the many 'Finn-' names.²⁰² A good many of these probably refer to the name of the people 'Finn',²⁰³ which in the western Scandinavian area was the usual name for the Sámi (see box text: The Naming of the Sámi, chapter 2).

There is, therefore, little basis for regarding the South Sámi's presence as a result of a late immigration from the north, as suggested by some scholars.²⁰⁴ On the contrary, there is reason to assume that the Sámi settlement area in the south was far larger than suggested by the situation today and by more recent historical sources. Parts of the arguments put forward about the lack of Sámi presence in the south appear, furthermore, to have been based on the old stereotype of the Sámi as reindeer nomads. The lack of evidence of such a form of production in early historical sources thus easily leads to the conclusion about a lack of Sámi presence. There is reason to remind both those who reject and those who defend a Sámi presence (here and in other areas) that, just as the Sámi economy and social structure changed over time, cultural manifestations and ethnic signals have also varied in time and space. This fact means we need to understand Sámi ethnicity as a dynamic process and not as a ready-made category that has either always existed or one which must have arisen as a result of 'migrations.'²⁰⁵

3.8 HUNTING SOCIETIES AND INTERETHNIC CONTACT IN THE EAST

In Finland, Iron Age agricultural settlement was concentrated in the southwestern parts of the country: the river valleys in the coastal areas of Finland Proper, Uusimaa and southern Ostrobothnia, as well as on the watercourses in southwestern Satakunta and Tavastia (Häme).²⁰⁶ This settlement had its roots in the coastal settlements of the Bronze Age, charac-

²⁰² Olsen, L. 1995, 1998.

²⁰³ Sandnes 1973.

²⁰⁴ Nielsen 1891; Haarstad 1981.

²⁰⁵ Bergstöl 1997, 88.

²⁰⁶ Schaumann-Lönnqvist 1992, 1999; Asplund 2008; Leskinen and Pesonen 2009.

terized by burial cairns and an economy based on hunting supplemented by agriculture. Through their burial customs, material culture, and in part, the economy, these Bronze Age communities exhibited distinct similarities with the southern Scandinavian area.²⁰⁷ At the same time, there were hunter-gatherer communities in the northern and eastern interior that were oriented towards the east, identifiable, among other things, through eastern bronzes and casting molds, as well as asbestos ceramics of the Kjelmøy and Luukonsaari type.²⁰⁸ Sporadic traces of cultivation from the Bronze Age onward are also found in the eastern parts of Finland, Savonia and Karelia. More widespread continuous cultivation did not, however, begin until the Middle Ages, and only took off after ca. AD 1500.²⁰⁹ In the area around Rovaniemi and Kemijärvi, some furnaces for iron production have been found which can be dated to just before or around the beginning of our era.²¹⁰ These furnaces occur in the eastern cultural environment and may have been operated by local specialists in cooperation with trading partners from the Russian area.²¹¹

When agriculture gained a foothold as the main source of livelihood in southwestern Finland in the early Roman Age and during the migration period from the fourth to sixth centuries AD, many of the traits of the hunting culture of the interior simultaneously disappeared.²¹² Local production of pottery and iron ceased and commodities imported from the east also seem to have disappeared. Finnish archaeologist Christian Carpelan argues that this change was the result of the peasant population starting to become more interested in the hunting grounds and the resources found there. The Sámi became suppliers of desired resources and abandoned some of their local production (iron and pottery) in exchange for corresponding products in return.²¹³ Like Odner,²¹⁴ Carpelan envisages economic specialization in which the Sámi 'cultivated' their pure hunting economy by making themselves dependent on other products from outside.

Despite the fact that few Iron Age finds dating from the period before the beginning of the Viking Age have been made outside farming hamlets

²⁰⁷ Edgren and Törnblom 1993, 118–135.

²⁰⁸ Huurre 1983, 1986; Carpelan 1984; Halinen 2005.

²⁰⁹ Taavitsainen et al. 1998, 230.

²¹⁰ Kehusmaa 1972; Schulz 1986; Kotivuori 1996.

²¹¹ Lavento 1999; Kosmenko and Manjuhin 1999.

²¹² Huurre 1983, 324.

²¹³ Carpelan 1984, 215.

²¹⁴ Odner 1983.

in southwest Finland,²¹⁵ one group of finds occurs relatively frequently in hunting areas, namely oval fire-lighting stones of quartz and quartzite.²¹⁶ These stones were carried in belts and used to light fires by striking them with a characteristic steel tool. Since the majority of these stones have been found in farming hamlets, they have been interpreted as traces of farmers' use of outlying areas for hunting, trading, and slash-and-burn agriculture. Another group of finds related to this are sleigh runners, skis, and boats in the Finnish interior.²¹⁷ Dating of these organic finds shows that they occurred throughout the Iron Age. The fact that the majority of them are means of transport can be regarded as an indication of contact between farming districts and hunting areas.²¹⁸ This use of outlying areas is known from more recent times under the designation of *eränkäynti* (Swedish *erämark*).²¹⁹

One can, however, question whether this can exclusively be regarded as a result of the expansion of the peasant population into the interior, although such expeditions may well have taken place. There is much to suggest a continuous Sámi presence until at least the Late Middle Ages.²²⁰ In relation to their skill in just this type of use of outlying resources, a symbiotic trading connection would probably have been a more advantageous strategy. One interesting aspect of such symbiosis is that any slash and burn-based agriculture in these forest areas may have resulted in a mixed forest, which was actually favorable for wild game.²²¹ Another circumstance is that the raw material for fire-lighting stones is found precisely in eastern and northern Finland, and may therefore have constituted a special product made by the Sámi for the peasants.²²² Boats, skis, and sleighs may also have been exchanged, and they naturally constituted a necessary technology for the hunting population living in the interior.

Finnish researchers have pointed out a number of place names which, when compared to ethnological material from later periods, indicate an exchange of commodities between the Sámi and Baltic-Finnish peoples.²²³ This trade is assumed to have taken place in what is now southern Finland.

²¹⁵ Taavitsainen 1988, 1991.

²¹⁶ Kivikoski 1967; Leskinen and Pesonen 2009, 46–47.

²¹⁷ Forssell 1995; Taavitsainen et al. 2007.

²¹⁸ Taavitsainen 1998, 8.

²¹⁹ Voionmaa 1947; Taavitsainen 1998, 214–216.

²²⁰ Taavitsainen et al. 2007, 146.

²²¹ Taavitsainen 1990, 70–71.

²²² Taavitsainen 1991, 64.

²²³ Itkonen, E. 1961; Vilkkuna 1969; Valonen 1980.

Central to this is the term *vatja* (**vakja*) or *vuovji* which designates a wedge or a piece of wood inserted into another piece of wood. Sticks such as these with inserted wedges ('marking sticks') were later used as a simple calculating tool in trade or tax collection. When the wedge was inserted into the other piece of wood, marks were cut diagonally across it. Both parties could then keep his own part and keep tabs on how much had been supplied or how much they had undertaken to supply. According to Valonen, the occurrence of a place name compounded with *vatja*- indicates that institutionalized trading relations had been established in what is now Finland between Finnish peoples and the Sámi already during the Early Iron Age.²²⁴ This interpretation is supported by the fact that in western Finnish dialects, an ancient poetic term *vuojalainen* is the designation for Sámi. The term may have been derived from *vuovjjuš* or *vuovji*, which means 'wedge' (see box text: The Naming of the Sámi). A corresponding word *vuovzza*, by the way, is still used in North Sámi, albeit only in the meaning a piece of cloth sewn in as a wedge into another piece of cloth.²²⁵ Thus, in the Iron Age, these terms with the basic meaning 'wedge' as the point of departure, were used by the Sámi and Finnish peoples as part of an institutionalized framework of trade and other transactions.

3.8.1 *Expansion during the Viking Age*

Exploitation of wilderness resources in Finland appears to have strongly intensified during the Viking Age, with an abundance of stray finds, depository finds, and graves in the interior. This applies in particular to the eastern parts of Tavastia, Savonia, and Karelia, although there is a similar trend in northern Finland.²²⁶ This increased number of finds can, of course, be seen as evidence of regular settlement expansion from the agricultural hamlets, but can perhaps be more plausibly regarded as a result of increased trade and/or a shift in the character of contacts. The demand for fur products may have led to the establishment of western Finnish (and probably Karelian) settlements in the interior, where the primary motivation was trade. People at these trading stations were also engaged in agriculture and iron production, and in this way they procured products that could be used as payments in trade with the Sámi. These satellite settlements could have been based to a considerable degree on the

²²⁴ Valonen 1980.

²²⁵ Nielsen 1979, 3:829.

²²⁶ Huurre 1983, 324–386; Taavitsainen 1988, 1991, 57–74.

local hunting population itself, in that those people began to settle permanently at the trading stations.

In the case of both graves and stray finds, an entirely new find category appears in the form of dress ornaments. The majority of these finds are women's ornaments, although brooches used on men's attire are also common. From the first part of the Viking Age, and in northern Finland in particular,²²⁷ Scandinavian (Norwegian) as well as Permian forms are found in addition to western Finnish. Well into the latter half of the Viking Age, however, ornaments from the western Finnish area become dominant. This changes, however, during the Early Middle Ages, or that period which is known in Finnish as the Crusade Period (1050–1300), when imports from Karelia clearly become the most important.²²⁸ Simultaneous with this Karelian influence on material culture, fortifications were built along the waterways of the Finnish interior.²²⁹ This can be interpreted as an attempt by the Karelians to secure their interests in the area, that is, to protect their trade with the Sámi.

Increased trade, as seen in the establishment of settlements and fortifications, was undoubtedly not merely for the good of the local population. Closer contacts also increased the potential for control of, and intervention in, the affairs of hunting communities. In relation to this point, it is interesting to note certain curious traits in the ornament material dating from the latter part of the Viking Age and Early Middle Ages in central Finland. During this period, clasp types characteristic of those from eastern Tavastia and Savonia come into use, and their distribution distinctly defines the border to the western Finnish area. At the same time, a certain border is established towards the east, in that western Finnish types have limited distribution towards Karelia.²³⁰ Based on an analysis of comprehensive material, Jussi-Pekka Taavitsainen thus concludes that this was an area "in which the eastern and the western culture united. A material culture thus developed which was different from the rest of West Finland. The pattern in Northern Finland is extremely similar."²³¹ During the Viking Age, the archaeological material from the interior, eastern, and northern parts of Finland again appears to indicate a

²²⁷ Huurre 1983, 324–386.

²²⁸ Taavitsainen 1988, 220, 226.

²²⁹ Taavitsainen 1988, 1991.

²³⁰ Taavitsainen 1990, 77–117.

²³¹ *Ibid.*, 99.

cultural identity that is different from the one we find in the southwestern parts of the country.

3.8.2 *The Lapp Cairns: an Eastern Parallel to the Hunting-Ground Graves?*

While in this context, certain scholars suggest that such indications were not present throughout most of the Iron Age,²³² a reservation must be made for an extremely interesting, though poorly-elucidated category of find, called the *lapinrauniot* or Lapp cairns (Swedish *lapprösen*). These are stone cairns situated outside agricultural areas, often close to lakes and rivers. In the interior, they are known in the Kemi districts in the north to Tavastia and Savonia in the south, although their precise distribution has not been thoroughly investigated. They are often found individually or in small groups, often on rocky ground in connection with promontories and lake islands.²³³

These cairns have not been a major object of archaeological examination and have often proven to be empty of finds or merely to contain bones or charcoal. One problem regarding classification, however, is that cairns which have provided finds in agricultural areas are usually classified as Iron Age graves and not as Lapp cairns. It seems clear that they have a broad chronological spread. Some graves have produced finds of Kjelmøy pottery as well as bronze and copper artifacts, indicative of dating as far back as the last millennium BC. New ¹⁴C datings of burnt bones confirm that the cairns were in use during the Early Metal Age.²³⁴ Finds from other graves indicate that they were in use throughout the Iron Age, and certainly until the Viking Age. Not all the cairns can be defined as graves, as some of them were used in connection with sacrifices or other ritual acts other than burials.²³⁵

The different interpretations and the unclear categorization of these cairns are in many ways reminiscent of the debate over Swedish lakeside graves. As the name suggests (Finnish *lapinrauniot* or *lappalaisrauniot*), in folklore they have been associated with the Sámi.²³⁶ Archaeologists such as Unto Salo and Mirja Miettinen, however, have linked them with the western Finnish peasant population's seasonal use of outlying resources,

²³² Huurre 1983, 324.

²³³ Taavitsainen 1990, 54–55; Edgren and Törnblom 1993, 142–143; Wallerström 1995, 138–139.

²³⁴ Taavitsainen 2003.

²³⁵ Taavitsainen 1990, 54–55; 2003, Muurimäki 1993, 4–5.

²³⁶ Okkonen 1992; Vilkuna 1993.



Fig. 19. "Lapp cairn" at Ilmolahti, Viitasaari. (Photo: Bjørnar Olsen.)

a tradition which, according to Salo, dates back to the Bronze Age.²³⁷ The presence of Kjelmøy pottery in the oldest of these graves, however, suggests an origin within the eastern hunting culture, and the geographic distribution of the graves outside agricultural hamlets suggests that these, too, were later built in a hunting environment. From a morphological point of view, the cairns also differ from the graves in the agricultural areas in that they are dry-walled without the use of sand.²³⁸

Perhaps these Lapp cairns in the interior of Finland should be regarded as a parallel to the Swedish hunting-ground graves? In spite of certain differences, several traits such as location, circumstances of the finds, and traditional materials link these graves. The shapes considered typical of the oldest lakeside graves are not usually recorded among the Finnish graves, but Leena Lehtinen describes some Lapp cairns from southern Savonia which consist of extremely low, round, and rectangular stone formations.²³⁹ These may be reminiscent of the oldest lakeside graves, although their precise age is not known. The scant material from investigated Lapp cairns suggests that these, too, involved cremations.

²³⁷ Salo 1981; Miettinen 1993.

²³⁸ Taavitsainen 1990, 55.

²³⁹ Lehtinen 1993, 71.

Both the hunting-ground graves and Lapp cairns are found in areas that were subject to expansion and trading activity from the nearby agricultural districts in the Late Iron Age. The fact that they are associated with the southern parts of both Sweden and Finland may suggest a different manifestation of the hunter-gatherer identity in these areas compared to the situation further north. In Finland, the graves appear to be most common in the areas bordering on the southwestern Finnish agricultural area.²⁴⁰ This may suggest that the graves formed part of an expression of territorial rights in the same way as slab-lined pits did in the north.²⁴¹ As was suggested in the South Sámi area, we should, however, also be cautious in this instance of accrediting the graves with a distinct Sámi ethnicity. The significance of the ethnic ascription *Hämäläiset*, given to the people of the interior by the southwest Finns and which later became the area designation *Häme*, is still not clear.²⁴² This may suggest the existence of alternative, more temporary identities, which were later channeled into historically-consolidated ethnicities.

3.9 GRAVES AND SACRIFICIAL SITES: SOURCES OF SÁMI SOCIAL EXISTENCE AND RELIGION

Within much of the Sámi settlement area in the Iron Age and Early Middle Ages we find a type of grave other than the southern forest and lakeside graves (hunting-ground graves). These graves were laid in scree and beneath rocks and boulders and are therefore commonly known as scree graves.²⁴³ Archaeological investigations of the scree graves began as early as the 1830s, and they have long been the most important archaeological source of knowledge about the Sámi past. However, other religious and ritual manifestations such as sacrificial sites and bear burials have also been essential objects in this research.

Among the sacrificial sites, the 'metal depots' from the interior of northern Sweden in particular have been the subject of attention among archaeologists.²⁴⁴ More recent excavations of bear burials, i.e., traces of the Sámi's bear cult, which, among other things, included the burial of

²⁴⁰ Taavitsainen 1990, 55.

²⁴¹ Taavitsainen 2003.

²⁴² Vahtola 1980; Taavitsainen 1990, 77; Wallerström 1997, 327.

²⁴³ Schanche 1987.

²⁴⁴ Serning 1956; Zachrisson 1984.

the bear's remains, have further contributed to our knowledge of early Sámi history. Seen in relation to the scree graves and sacrificial sites, they help to shed new light on the social existence and religion of the Sámi, and especially on social and cultural conditions in the Viking Age and Early Middle Ages. In the following section, we shall take a closer look at these three forms of religious expression and the archaeological research carried out in relation to them since the 1980s.

3.9.1 *Scree and Rock Graves*

The most detailed study of this Sámi burial practice has been conducted by Audhild Schanche, and the following section presents some of her most important findings.²⁴⁵ Although the morphology of scree graves varies tremendously, it is not possible to read any unambiguous chronological differences out of this variation. One general trait of this burial practice is the lack of soil in its construction. The deceased was laid in an airy chamber surrounded by walls of stone, either natural or made by humans. The chamber was covered with slabs from the scree. One peculiar trait of the way bodies were treated is that the deceased were swathed in sewn birch bark. This has been documented from the earliest graves onwards, although this practice does seem to have been less common in the Late Middle Ages. Along with the bones of the deceased, the bones of mammals, birds, and fish have been found deposited in the graves.²⁴⁶

The geographical distribution of the graves covers northern Norway, Trøndelag, and Norrland in Sweden. They are also most likely present in Finnish Lapland and on the Kola Peninsula, although research has yet to be conducted to confirm their occurrence here. The largest concentration of these graves is in Varanger, where more than 200 burial sites have been found (and more than 1200 graves recorded). Smaller concentrations have been found in Laksefjord, Porsanger, Kvaenangen, Tysfjord, Salten, and Tärna parish in Sweden. It seems that most of the graves in the north are concentrated along the coast, while those south of Salten are mostly found inland.²⁴⁷ However, this picture probably needs to be nuanced, as there is reason to assume that the absence of graves in the interior of the north can largely be explained by the fact that this area has not been

²⁴⁵ Schanche 2000.

²⁴⁶ Schanche 2000; Hildre 2002.

²⁴⁷ Schanche 2000, 160–162.



Fig. 20. Scree grave at Čiesti/Fugleberget near Mortensnes, Varanger. (Photo: Bjørnar Olsen.)

surveyed very thoroughly. It is nevertheless clear that this type of grave requires certain geological conditions, and different types of graves must have existed in areas with other conditions.²⁴⁸

The scree grave burial custom appears to have come into being during the last millennium BC, continuing in a somewhat modified form until the seventeenth or eighteenth century AD. However, considerable geographical variation is associated with this chronology. Most scree graves dated earlier than AD 800 seem confined to the Varanger area in eastern Finnmark, Norway. Though there are indications that this picture may need to be modified, it was not until the Viking Age and Early Middle Ages that this custom became common in the coastal zone from eastern Finnmark to Salten and also in the northern Swedish mountain zone. All the scree graves that can be said with certainty to belong to the period after AD 1700 come from the South Sámi area, where, according to Schanche, scree graves are not documented earlier than the

²⁴⁸ For an overview, see Manker 1961.

sixteenth century AD. This, however, may reflect a lack of investigation as much as historical realities.²⁴⁹ Further north, the burial custom appears to cease towards the end of the seventeenth century AD.²⁵⁰

The most common objects found in graves older than AD 300 are asbestos pottery of the Kjelmøy type, bone tools and utensils, stone artifacts, and sometimes also iron implements. Graves from between the fourth and tenth centuries AD have few finds, but the few examples of imported ornaments, as mentioned previously, point to western contacts.²⁵¹ In the scree graves from the period ca. 900–1300 AD, a wealth of material has been found consisting of imported ornaments and dress ornaments primarily of eastern origin (Permian, Finnish, Eastern Baltic, Russian) (see fig. 13). These finds come to an end in the Late Middle Ages. Many graves from the Late Middle Ages and later contain reindeer sleighs in which the deceased person was laid, and in some cases, the dead were laid in wooden coffins.²⁵²

The graves that have been examined show a relatively even distribution between men and women, although with a preponderance of men in the material outside Varanger. Men and women are given equal burials in chambers and cavities in scree and rocks. Corpses of both sexes were wrapped in birch bark and/or laid on reindeer sleighs, and animal bones are found in both men's and women's graves. Whereas grave goods in the form of objects do not appear to be gender-differentiated in either the Early Metal Age or the Early Iron Age, marked differences appear to develop in the Late Iron Age/Early Middle Ages. Imported metal ornaments are primarily found in women's graves.²⁵³

In her analysis, Schanche points out distinct similarities in the Sámi sacred topography: scree graves, sacrificial sites, and bear graves (see below) appear to be confined to ragged and rock-bound landscapes sheltered from settlement. This topography affords a rich potential for metaphoric/symbolic thinking as regards to death. First, screes, rock crevices, and caves may have appeared as natural passages to the realm of the dead, *Jábmiiid-áibmu*. In the Sámi worldview, this comprised the lower of three spheres and was beneath the world of the living. Second, the scree constitutes a 'dead,' static landscape without vegetation, and the choice

²⁴⁹ See Dunfeld-Aagård 2005.

²⁵⁰ Schanche 2000, 165–192.

²⁵¹ Hildre 2002.

²⁵² Schanche 2000, 188–190.

²⁵³ Schanche 2000, 218–224; Hildre 2002.

of this landscape can be explained by the fact that it provides associations with death and perhaps transformations. It offers a natural metaphoric link between the static, lasting elements of stone and bones on the one hand, and the living but temporary elements of flesh and vegetation on the other.²⁵⁴

JÁBMIID-ÁIBMU, RUOHTTA-ÁIBMU AND SAAJVOE—THE WORLDS OF THE DEAD

The Sámi conception of the world consisted of a cosmic stratification into three horizontal levels: heaven, the earth, and the underworld (in some areas a quintuple division is also mentioned). The written sources mention different designations of various types of realms of the dead, which suggests that conceptions of life after death were differentiated. To some extent, it might seem that the way one's life was conducted determined where one would end up after death—a common conception among several northeastern peoples. The actual realm of the dead appears to have been Jábmiid-áibmu, located in the lower sphere, beneath the earth. It was here the (free) soul went for the purpose of obtaining a new body from Jábmiid-áhkka, ruler of the underworld. According to one tradition, the highest god also received the souls of the departed after they had spent some time in the realm of the dead.^c No sharp distinction existed between the living and the dead. Dead ancestors were considered part of the family: they could look after the reindeer and be consulted when important decisions were to be made. The rituals in connection with death and burial reflect the notion that the living still had connections with the dead.

Sámi conceptions of death are closely related to their understanding of the soul. Two conceptions of the soul, a bodily soul and a free soul, are commonly noted. The free soul was active when the body was not in its normal, waking state: in dreams, visions and trances. It had a spiritual form of existence, a sort of shadow only loosely connected to its bodily bearer. At death, the free soul was permanently liberated from the body and departed for the kingdom of the dead.

As well as a free soul, everyone had a bodily soul, a spiritual quality bound directly to a human as a physical being. As long as the body was alive, the bodily soul could be identical with the breath. However, whereas the free soul left the body after death, the bodily soul remained bound to the physical remains, particularly the skeleton. From here it could go on excursions, among other things as a ghost.

²⁵⁴ Schanche 1998, 282–287.

^c Sidenius, referred to in Rydving 1995, 81.

A possibly deeper-lying, more foreboding kingdom of death was Ruohitta-áibmu, ruled by the demon of death, Ruohitta. This kingdom of the dead was also associated with horses and horse sacrifice. These conceptions have been interpreted by many earlier researchers as loans from Norse beliefs (Odin, Sleipner). This interpretation came about because, from a diffusionist perspective, researchers were preoccupied with cultural borrowing from the Sámi's neighbors. However, the horse theme or motif also appears on bronze pendants found in Sámi graves (see fig. 13). These ornaments were produced in Karelia and in the Baltic regions, but also further to the East. Together with the bird motif, the horse represents common conceptions related to the kingdom of the dead.

A third abode for the souls of the departed was known as Saajvoe or Saajve-aajmoe in South Sámi. The Saajvoe sphere is depicted in light, positive tones and appears to be thought of as a paradise where departed ancestors lived on. It was often took physical form as a holy mountain, although it could also be associated with lakes. Saajvoe was populated by herds of well-fed reindeer and ample access to resources such as pastures, wild game, fish, etc. It is not quite clear where this kingdom stood in relation to the other kingdoms of the dead, although there do seem to have been points of contact. Some have suggested that Saajvoe should be perceived as the abode of the longest departed. One major interpretation suggests that Jábmíid-áibmu was the real, original realm of the dead which was common to everyone. Yet diligent shamans (*noaidis*) were able to achieve a higher status after death. According to shamanistic ideology, *noaidis* and other deserving souls could, after death, serve as helping and guiding spirits for the living and thus have access to a happier kingdom of the dead than the ordinary deceased. In keeping with this understanding, Saajve-aajmoe can be perceived as an abode for helping spirits and guardian spirits. The idea of the Saajvoe sphere is primarily prevalent in the South Sámi regions. Terms equivalent to South Sámi *saajvoe* (*saajve*) occur, however, in different forms throughout the entire Sámi area (Lule Sámi *sájvva*; North Sámi *sáiva*), albeit with different meanings in the different regions. From Lule lappmark and northwards, the word is not found as the designation for holy mountains; instead, they are referred to directly as *bassi*, that is, 'holy,' and similarly, they referred to the residents of such holy mountains as *bassivárri-olbmát* and *-nieiddat*—in other words, as 'holy mountain men and women'.

In the Lule and North Sámi areas, the designation *sáiva* related to lakes and water. This may date back to an originally literal meaning since the word is assumed to have been borrowed from the proto-Scandinavian **saiwaR*, **saiwa-z*, the same word that forms the basis of the modern Norwegian word for lake, *sjø*. On the one hand, *sáiva* may quite simply refer to 'fresh water', but on the other, it also designates 'holy lakes', which were believed to have a double bottom because so little water flowed in and out. Moreover, fish in these lakes were much more difficult to catch than other fish, and special precautions had to be taken during and after fishing in such waters. The idea of the double bottom does not appear to occur among the Kola Sámi; on the contrary, the sanctity of the lakes was related to the spirit one assumed was in residence there.

Sources: Bäckman 1975, Rydving 1995, and Schanche 2000.

Schanche points out that the emergence of the scree grave custom in Varanger in the Early Metal Age represented a clear break with previous practice, in that a ritual distinction was made between dwelling place and burial site. While the dwelling and the habitation site in the Late Stone Age and Early Metal Age also seems to have been the main site for ritual performances, and also included burials,²⁵⁵ the scree grave custom implied a separation of the homes of the dead from the homes of the living. Moreover, while graves in previous periods are few and seem confined to certain individuals, the scree graves represent a common, widely accessible way of burial.

With the emergence of the scree graves the burial site came to challenge the role of the house and the dwelling place as the most important arena for ritual life, and the scree grave custom is interpreted as reflecting the emergence of a collective, relatively autonomous realm of the dead.²⁵⁶ It is tempting to interpret the appearance of lakeside graves in the South Sámi area in a similar way. It should be mentioned though that hearths are found in and near burial sites in this area, and thus that the changes may be less distinct here than further north.²⁵⁷

3.9.2 *The 'Metal Depots' Sacrificial Sites in the Northern Swedish Interior*

The scree grave custom spread during the Viking Age/Early Middle Ages to a large area. This occurred at the same time as other ritual practices, such as bear graves and sacrifices, seem to have intensified and become more widespread.²⁵⁸ Among the sacrificial sites, a group of twelve metal 'depots' in the interior of northern Sweden deserve special attention. These sites are distinguished by virtue of their extensive depositings of metal objects such as coins, hunting weapons, and ornaments.²⁵⁹ Doubts have previously been expressed as to whether these are actually sacrificial sites,²⁶⁰ although the current general consensus is that they are Sámi sacrificial sites.²⁶¹ As many as five of the sites are in the Store Lule River

²⁵⁵ Olsen 1994.

²⁵⁶ Schanche 2000, 288–290.

²⁵⁷ Ambrosiani et al. 1984; Zachrisson 1997, 117–121.

²⁵⁸ Fossum 2006.

²⁵⁹ Serning 1956; Zachrisson 1984; Mulk 1984, 1996. One of these metal hoards, Bolnovuoddu/Pålnovuoddo, is just on the Norwegian side of the border in Troms county (see fig. 10).

²⁶⁰ Fjellström 1962.

²⁶¹ Zachrisson 1984; Wallerström 1995. With the possible exception of two of the hoards, those from Gråträsk in Piteå parish and Mörträsk in Lycksele parish, which have been interpreted by Zachrisson as respectively "thieves' dens" used to store material plundered from sacrificial sites and as a merchant's stock. However, Wallerström (1995) has produced convincing evidence of them being sacrificial sites.

Valley, and the large sacrificial site Unna Saiva in Gällevare parish on the border with Norrbotten county is not far away. Two of the sites are situated near Torneträsk to the north, while the remaining sites are further south in Norrland, close to the border between southeastern Lappland/Västerbotten and Ångermanland. The sacrificial sites are found, as a rule, on the edge of water or close to it. The local topography is frequently characterized by rocky escarpments, landslide scree slopes, caves, large boulders, and peculiar rocks. In addition to metal objects, one also find antlers and bones at most sacrificial sites, sometimes in quite thick layers.²⁶²

On the basis of the metal finds, it would seem that the sacrificial sites date from the period AD 900/1000 to 1300, although some of the metal finds are from the ninth century AD.²⁶³ More recent studies suggest that the sacrifices of antlers and bones also continued after the period of metal offerings.²⁶⁴ The most commonly found objects are arrowheads of iron, followed by iron tools (including knives and harpoons), ornaments, coins, and glass beads. In addition, there are needle containers, scales, cut bronze and silver sheets, metal filament, and pendants made from bronze-copper alloy, tin, and lead. The ornament material is dominated by eastern types, resembling those found in the scree graves. Particularly common are open penannular brooches of bronze, although several other types of brooches have also been found. Arm and finger rings of silver and bronze are also found, as are various kinds of bronze pendants. The oldest coins are ninth century Arabic coins, although most of the coins are Norwegian and can be dated to AD 1050–1200.²⁶⁵

One of the sacrificial sites, Seitaure (Siejdávrr) in Jokkmokk, has yielded finds which may indicate a significantly greater time depth for this ritual practice.²⁶⁶ Apart from bones, bronze sheets, and a glass bead, the find also contained an edge shard from Kjelmøy pottery dating back to the third or fourth century AD at the latest. The shard could of course be a remnant of previous activity, in the event of earlier settlement on the site. However, according to Mulk, the site is located on a small, narrow headland that is little suited for settlement and which was also used as sacrificial site containing a *sieidi* in more recent times. It is

²⁶² Zachrisson 1984, 14–15.

²⁶³ Zachrisson 1984, 73–74; Mulk 1994, 172.

²⁶⁴ Mulk 2005.

²⁶⁵ Zachrisson 1984, 70–76; Mulk 1995, 172; Wallerström 1995, 188–189.

²⁶⁶ Manker 1957, 51; Mulk 1994, 172–173.

referred to locally as Bassenjárgga (*Bassenjarka*) 'the holy promontory'.²⁶⁷ Even though the pottery shard may have nothing to do with the sacrificial site, it is tempting to connect it with indications elsewhere that Kjelmøy pottery assumed a more ritual function in connection with burials and sacrifices in the last phase of its functional period (see chapter 3.2).²⁶⁸ If this sacrificial site does date back to the Early Iron Age, it may be an indication that this type of ritual practice had deep roots but became more geographically widespread in the Viking Age and the Early Middle Ages.²⁶⁹

There is considerable agreement in the archaeological literature that these metal-bearing sacrificial sites have to be seen in connection with intensification of the fur trade in the Viking Age and Early Middle Ages.²⁷⁰ This trade channeled valuable items back to the Sámi areas, and Zachrisson sees both these sacrificial site finds and silver hoard finds as an expression of the fact that the Sámi experienced an economic boom during this period.²⁷¹ The finds reflect trading contacts with both the east and west. In the west, trade was probably organized by north Norwegian chieftains, and later probably by the king's officials. Contacts to the east were with Karelia and the areas around Ladoga and the Gulf of Finland. The fact that coins are the dominant western category of find, while ornaments, often with religious or cult motifs, are the most important eastern type, suggests that the contacts were of differing characters and cultural content.²⁷² We shall return to this point later.

The majority of these sacrificial sites were probably used collectively by the entire local community (*siida*). In addition to being the arena for religious acts, they probably also played an important social and ideological role. The goods channeled back to the Sámi communities through the increased exchange of commodities in the Viking Age and Middle Ages may, as previously mentioned, have formed the basis for social hierarchization. The control of imported commodities may have given certain persons increased power and status and thus threatened harmony and solidarity in the community. Considering this possibility, Inga Maria Mulk has suggested that the social function of the metal 'sacrifices' was to hinder inequality caused by accumulation of capital by individuals:

²⁶⁷ Mulk 1994, 172.

²⁶⁸ Schanche 2000; Sundqvist 1998; compare with K. Schanche 1994, 40–41.

²⁶⁹ Mulk 1994, 224.

²⁷⁰ Serning 1956; Zachrisson 1984; Mulk 1994; Wallerström 1995.

²⁷¹ Zachrisson 1984, 109.

²⁷² Mulk 1994, 225–227.

I consider it highly probable that the exchange of commodities in the Late Iron Age and Early Middle Ages involved an accumulation of value equivalents. If it was considered necessary to maintain an egalitarian system in which all had equal rights to provisions but also to abundance, certain measures may have been taken. For this reason, it might have been strategically important to dispose of surpluses of prestigious objects in such a way as to make allowances for the interests of the *süida* as a whole. Such measures may, for example, have included the depositing of the profits from the fur trade in the form of a sacrifice. Procedures such as this may have counteracted any tendencies towards hierarchization.²⁷³

Like Mulk, we believe that these sacrificial sites from the Viking Age and Middle Ages also had important social functions in addition to underlying religious motives. In a period during which the Sámi communities were under tremendous external pressure, sacrificial rituals may have had a socially unifying effect and communicated central cultural values. However, this hypothesis does not necessarily conflict with processes of social differentiation. On the contrary, such communication of solidarity and unity relating to common cultural values may actually be considered more imperative in times of crisis when the reproduction of the social order was under threat. In relation to this, we should not ignore the possibility that collective sacrifices also played a legitimizing, ideological role, by serving to mask growing social disparity and inequality.

3.9.3 *Social Change and Increased Ritual Activity*

There is considerable evidence that social and religious differentiation took place within Sámi society during the Viking Age and Early Middle Ages.²⁷⁴ Both the archaeological material and written sources indicate that hierarchization took place in some Sámi communities during this period. Richly furnished Sámi graves, such as those at Vardø and Ekkerøy²⁷⁵ indicate that the wealth that was returned to Sámi society through the fur trade was not evenly distributed. Norse sources committed to writing in the twelfth century and later (such as *Heimskringla*, *Volundarkviða*, *Ágrip*) frequently mention “Finn kings” (*finnekonger*), which substantiates the assumed existence of Sámi chieftains or men of high status in this period (see chap. 4.5).²⁷⁶ As we have previously discussed, the leading strata of

²⁷³ Mulk 1994, 226, authors’ translation.

²⁷⁴ Storli 1994; Schanche 2000; Zachrisson 1997.

²⁷⁵ Sjøvold 1974, 180–181; Schanche 2000.

²⁷⁶ Bergsland 1977, 47; Mundal 1996, 110; Zachrisson 1997, 144–148.

the Norwegian and Sámi societies may have institutionalized economic transactions by means of the exchange of commodities and intermarriage.

Differentiation may also have taken place on the cultural and ritual level, expressed through a clearer distinction between sacrificial practice and burial rites. By comparing material from the scree graves with that from Sámi sacrificial sites in northern Sweden, Audhild Schanche has pointed at clear differences between the artifacts deposited in the two contexts. Bones and antlers are found at sacrificial sites, whereas only bones are deposited in the graves. The interpretation is that these materials were associated with different levels in the Sámi cosmology: bones were tied to the deceased and the lower world, while antlers were associated with the middle and upper cosmological levels. As far as metal objects are concerned, the graves demonstrate an even greater restriction on what could be deposited than one finds at the sacrificial sites. Two of the major find categories from the sacrificial sites, iron arrowheads and coins, are completely absent from the scree grave finds. Schanche's interpretation is that the sacrificial sites were the arena of universal religious practice aimed towards the world of the dead and other cosmological levels. The burial rituals, on the other hand, were much more limited and imposed much clearer restrictions on what could be deposited.²⁷⁷ As mentioned above, silver hoard finds appear to involve further differentiation of what could be deposited in different contexts, which substantiates the assumed increase in formalization and differentiation of social and ritual forms of expression.

Schanche sees the differentiation between burial customs and sacrificial practice as an expression of both social and religious changes in Sámi society. In the Early Metal Age/Early Iron Age, death cults and hunting cults were manifested seemingly independently of gender, as far as can be discerned from burial customs. Both men and women received hunting weapons as burial gifts. This changed during the Viking Age, as hunting cults became more intense and reserved for men. From that time, hunting weapons such as iron arrowheads were excluded from the burial rites. They were replaced by imported ornaments: exotic, non-functional ornaments primarily reserved for women. This is interpreted as representing a change in gender relations. Women were excluded from hunting and from handling game, and the ideological legitimization of this may have been the source of the well-known Sámi taboos on women's participation

²⁷⁷ Schanche 2000, 276–286.

in hunting and certain sacrificial practices. Schanche believes that these changes were related to the fur trade and increased demand for hunting products. This increased the significance of the hunt, and at the same time strengthened the role of men in society. Why then do ornaments procured through the fur trade end up primarily in women's graves? Schanche's explanation for this is that "... the women are excluded from some ritual acts, instead becoming recipients of magical objects via the exchange systems of which the same rituals were a part. The women assume the role of consumers rather than producers in hunting and hunting magic, as well as in the system of exchange involving hunting and trapping products."²⁷⁸ The fact that the richest known Sámi graves in the northern Sámi area are female graves may, however, raise doubts as to whether women's status actually deteriorated. Is it possible that women attained a prominent position through trade; a position actually emphasized by the fact that the deceased was buried with a rich selection of imported ornaments?²⁷⁹

Whatever the case may be, it appears that in the Viking Age, a more segregated Sámi society emerged in which cultural practices seem to have been subject to increasing social control. All the same, some objects are included in both sacrificial finds and grave finds, primarily ornaments from the east. This group of finds is particularly significant because it counts for much of the new Sámi 'visibility' in the archaeological material of the Viking Age and Early Middle Ages.

An obvious question that arises is why were these eastern artifacts were so easily incorporated into the Sámi cultural repertoire, while the boundary to contemporary Norse culture seems to have been strictly maintained? One reason for this may be the aggravated relationships with the Norse population, especially after Christianity gained a foothold, and interethnic contact increasingly involved encounters with representatives of the crown. In a situation such as this, the Sámi may have found contact and exchange with Finno-Ugric groups more culturally and religiously rewarding.²⁸⁰ Many of the ornaments that came from the east were of important religious and ideological significance and may have been designed specially with a view to trading with the hunting groups of the North. Inga Maria Mulk has emphasized that ornaments in the form of stylized animal figures probably are related to the pre-Christian Sámi (and

²⁷⁸ Ibid., 325.

²⁷⁹ Hildre 2002, 115–121.

²⁸⁰ Makarov 1992.

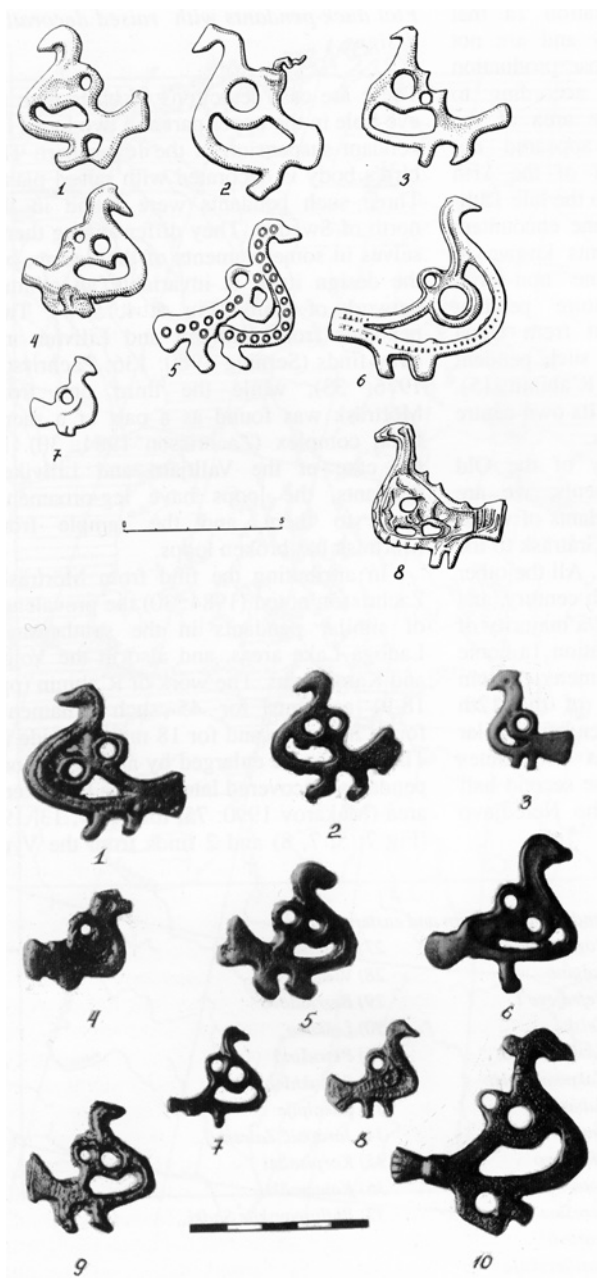


Fig. 21. Bird-shaped pendants of eastern origin (from Makarov 1991).

Finno-Ugric) religion.²⁸¹ It is reasonable to associate these with animal spirits, which we know fulfilled important functions in the Sámi religion during later periods, such as the bird *saajveledtie* or *noaideloddi*, which was one of the shaman's helping spirits on his travels to other worlds (see fig. 21). The horse figure found on many of the pendants may be associated with the rather demonic kingdom of the dead *Ruohtta-áibmu* and the god *Ruohtta*, who is associated with equestrian sacrifice and depicted on the drum as a horse/rider (see fig. 13).²⁸² Due to widely shared cosmological conceptions concerning the structure of the universe, the Sámi may have chosen to emphasize their eastern attachment more strongly. The harsh conduct of the state authorities towards the pagan Norse religion, which was probably relatively tolerant and in many ways related to that of the Sámi, might have made this choice easier.

Related to this 'inner' consolidation, a special ritual practice spread among the Sámi during the Viking Age and the Early Middle Ages: the bear burials. Rituals concerning bears and the burying of bears are evident in large sections of the circumpolar Boreal region, and can be regarded as another eastern trait of Sámi culture. The bear was sacred to the Sámi, and the hunt, the subsequent bear feast, and the burial of its bones were all associated with numerous rituals. Bear graves are known in large portions of the Sámi area, although until recently, few of them had been subjected to archaeological examination or dated. Early examinations carried out in the interior of Norrland, most of them in the southern Sámi area, suggest a late dating to around the eighteenth/nineteenth centuries AD.²⁸³

BEAR HUNTING AND RITES

Both in the pre-Christian tradition and later, the bear was considered to be an animal with very special qualities and great power, both physical as well spiritual. Bears were therefore treated with tremendous respect and, as far as humans were concerned, it was important to maintain good relations with them. The primary manifestation of this respect came in the form of special rites in connection with the bear hunt and the burial of the slain bears. Second was the way direct reference to the beast was avoided in daily communication; circumlocutions and metaphors were used instead. The Sámi imagined

²⁸¹ Mulk 1996.

²⁸² Ränk 1985; Schanche 2000, 256–7.

²⁸³ Zachrisson and Iregren 1974; Mulk and Iregren 1995.

that the bear was all-knowing and all-hearing and understood human language. So instead of using the direct denomination *guovža*, they used allusions such as *suohkut* ('the thick-haired one'), *meahcce-áddjá* ('grandfather in the forest') and *luoduid eadni* ('mother of the wilderness'). The use of images such as 'grandfather' and 'grandmother' emphasized kinship between the bear and humans. Despite the bear's formidable strength, it could be characterized as a good-natured old man of the forest and an older relative. These terms also reflect human beings' togetherness with nature. However, this use of circumlocutions also drew a distinction between human understanding and the bears' faculties, in that human imagination allowed people to make compound words from various semantic areas and give them a new sense without the bear comprehending the meaning. Moreover, numerous myths, legends, and a number of folk tales were associated with the bear.

The bear hunt and the way the beast was slain were also subject to very special rules. The ceremonies were supposed to confirm and strengthen the good relationship between the bear and the humans. When a hunter found a bear's den, he ringed it in by walking round it and leaving his footprints. Then the hunters would set off in a group led by the man who had found the den. The spear with which he would kill the bear had a magical brass ring threaded to it. After the bear had been slain, the hunters sang the bear song, which, among other things, paid homage to the bear and bid him welcome. Special steps also had to be taken when the hunters returned home: the hunters were not allowed to enter the turf hut through the usual entrance but had to use the 'holy back door' behind the hearth and the *boaššu*, the innermost and most sacred part of the tent. The women who awaited the hunters had to observe them through a brass ring, while at the same time spattering them with the red juice of chewed alder bark. The meat was cooked and the bear's bones buried according to rather special ritual rules. One possible interpretation of the purpose of a bear burial is that the bear was supposed to be resurrected, return to the members of his own species, and tell them how well he had been received by the humans, thus confirming their relationship with them.

Sources: Fjellström 1981 (1755); Myrstad 1996.

Investigations carried out by Ragnild Myrstad, however, have given us an entirely different picture.²⁸⁴ She has documented twenty-nine bear graves on the Norwegian side of the border, mainly along the coast of northern Norway. These graves are often located on precipitous rocky slopes and massifs, areas of scree and boulder fields, that is, in the types of terrain where one usually finds Sámi scree graves and sacrificial sites.

²⁸⁴ Myrstad 1996.



Fig. 22. Bear grave investigated at Gällholmen, Stensele parish, Lappland. (Photo: Göte Böhlin, Västerbottens museum.)

The bear graves span a very long period of time, from the third and fourth centuries AD up to the eighteenth century. Two of the graves have been dated to the period before the Viking Age (both in Troms), while the majority of them fall within the period AD 900–1300. Dating from this period is known for such widely separated areas of northern Norway as East Finnmark, Troms, and Salten. In addition, bear graves from northern Sweden, more precisely in Jokkmokk and Lövånger, are also dated to this period.²⁸⁵ These data suggest that bear burials became widespread within the Sámi area precisely in the late Viking Age and Early Middle Ages. At the same time, it is interesting to note that bear graves also appear relatively frequently in the previously mentioned border zone between the Norse and Sámi settlement areas of northern Norway, where the silver hoards are also concentrated. The concentration in northern Troms County is particularly striking: there are six graves on the island of Spildra in Kvaenangen.²⁸⁶ There is also a certain concentration in southern Troms/northern Nordland counties.²⁸⁷

²⁸⁵ Broadbent and Storå 2003; Broadbent 2010.

²⁸⁶ Grydeland 1996.

²⁸⁷ Myrstad 1996.

3.10 SOCIAL AND ETHNIC PROCESSES IN THE IRON AGE AND EARLY MIDDLE AGES

Following the cessation of eastern contacts with metal-producing peoples in what is today Russia around the beginning of our era, the cultural history of northern Fennoscandia entered a new epoch. In the Sámi areas, the millennium that followed was characterized by apparent ethnic anonymity in the material remains. The Finnish archaeologist Matti Huurre even states that “at the end of the Early Metal Age, the region’s inhabitants seem to lose their identity in the find material.”²⁸⁸ Another Finnish archaeologist, Christian Carpelan, has given the following explanation of this ‘anonymity’ in the archaeological material:

It was now (in the first century AD) that peasant culture’s exploitation of wilderness areas began in Finland, Sweden, and Norway. The original inhabitants of the wilderness areas, with their eastern hunting and fishing culture, were initially used as providers and later as objects of taxation . . . The production of pottery and iron in the eastern cultural sphere rapidly ceased after this wave of influence began. It is my belief that Sámi culture began to change at this point in time into a culture that provided products from the wilderness areas, and at the same time abandoned some of their characteristic traits.²⁸⁹

According to Carpelan, the relationship of dependence on the surrounding peasant communities caused the hunter-gatherers to abandon some of their characteristic cultural traits, which were the consequence of a more independent economic adaptation. This change may also be due to the fact that the need to signal their ethnicity, or to emphasize separate socio-economic interaction patterns, was less prominent among the hunter-gatherers during the first millennium AD than in both the preceding and following eras. Like Carpelan, it is our view that this was related to the specific condition of interaction established between the Sámi hunting communities and their farming neighbors. This interaction involved new social and economic conditions for the hunting population, which, in turn, affected their cultural articulation. We shall examine this subject more closely below.

²⁸⁸ Huurre 1983, 324; after the translation in Taavitsainen 1988, 218.

²⁸⁹ Carpelan 1984, 85; trans. in Taavitsainen 1988, 215.

3.10.1 *Change in Contact Spheres from 'Distant' to 'Close' Connections*

During the Early Metal Age, interaction between the hunting population of northern Fennoscandia and the metal-producing societies to the south and east was characterized by long distance networks where things and goods traveled through many intermediaries. The hunter-gatherer groups became involved in different systems of exchange: the coastal population in a southern network and the population of the interior (and the far northern coast) in an eastern one. Direct encounters, in which representatives of other cultures actually met the hunter-gatherers, were probably quite limited. However, in the Iron Age, these former long-distance contacts, characterized as they were by minimal face-to-face interaction, were replaced by much more intimate contacts organized on a local, inter-ethnic level. In northern Norway, the former hunting communities along the coast had transformed and now appeared as hierarchically-organized farming communities. It was through these groups that the 'remaining' hunter-gatherers in the north and the interior organized much of their contacts with the outside world.

Interaction across social, economic, and cultural lines of demarcation at this time became a much more apparent and constant aspect of the hunting communities' existence—though geography, of course, influenced the degree and nature of contact. The new trading partners could be seen and felt to a much higher degree; they were not strangers in the same sense as before, but people with local roots and an intimate knowledge of the social and economic geography. One consequence of interethnic interaction now taking place largely on a local level is that it could be intensified and form the basis of more extensive economic specialization. Geographic proximity facilitates far more stable and extensive relations of exchange, which in many areas also may have included the exchange of essential provisions. As suggested above, this intimate contact may have contributed to the Sámi fulfilling economic (and religious) specialist functions within the Norse chieftaincies' redistributive systems.

The fact that the Sámi's material culture during this period appears less distinct may partly be related to the change in interactional context. Links with external trading partners were previously tenuous and unsettled, and hunting groups competed for attention and exclusive rights to 'their' trading partners. Such conditions may have required a higher degree of overt signaling of identity. Many of the products from the east and south were probably passed on by middlemen, groups that operated over great distances between producers and markets and, consequently, depended on clear cultural codes in a vast and complex landscape. Signaling one's

identity was therefore absolutely essential in order to gain access to foreign products.

When external exchange was transferred to the local level in the Early Iron Age, the problem of identification disappeared. The various trading partners had intimate knowledge of one another, and their social and economic forms, together with geographical belonging, were sufficient criteria for ascribing identity. During this period, a powerful emphasis on ethnicity was primarily a problem for the newly-established Germanic population, which, by means of dress ornaments and other expressions of material culture, was preoccupied with communicating their southern affinity, i.e., their Germanic identity. It may well be that this urge to emphasize ethnicity explains why these northern agricultural communities in the early Iron Age appear much more distinct than the contemporary Sámi hunting communities.

3.10.2 *Language and Ethnicity in the Iron Age*

To what extent can we speak of a Sámi ethnic identity in the Iron Age, and how geographically widespread could this identity have been? As mentioned previously, there is considerable variation in the archaeological material, which gives few indications of the existence of a pan-Sámi repertoire of symbols—at least not until the latter part of the Viking Age. However, language could have also been a unifying and contrasting feature of identity. We shall therefore take a closer look at what linguistic data might reveal about the ethnicity of the Sámi and their relationships with other groups during the Iron Age.

As a result of different forms of cultural contact, linguists assume that an earlier original language common to Sámi and Balto-Finnic (which could be termed ‘the common Sámi-Finnic proto-language’) was divided up into languages which constituted the precursors of Sámi and the different Balto-Finnic languages respectively (see box text: The Sámi Language).²⁹⁰ This separation is assumed to have taken place in the latter half of the second millennium BC. Considerable uncertainty is connected with both the dating and cultural processes of linguistic development, but this proto-language may have been spoken throughout much of northern Fennoscandia, including the later ‘Germanic’ coastal areas.²⁹¹ A language change in the direction of Germanic may have occurred simultaneously with the emergence of the precursors of modern Balto-Finnic languages.

²⁹⁰ Sammallahti 1995; Strade 1997.

²⁹¹ Strade 1997, 183–184.

This linguistic parting of ways may have occurred as part of a more extensive process of cultural differentiation during the last millennium BC, as we have described earlier (see chap. 2.5). As a result, what began as a relatively heterogeneous population of hunter-gatherers was divided up into three main groups. In the south of what is now Finland lived the predecessors of the Finns, who, to an increasing extent, adopted agriculture as their principal livelihood. In inner and northern Fennoscandia lived the predecessors of the Sámi, who kept to their original way of life as hunter-gatherers. In the coastal areas of northern Norway and northern Sweden, we must assume that a more dramatic language change took place. Here, the predecessors of the Germanic population adopted an early Germanic language on the basis of social and economic choices. During the first few centuries AD, Sámi (ethnic) identity was gradually consolidated through interaction and exchange with Finnish (Finlanders) and Scandinavian (northern Germanic) groups. As a result of this trade, mutual stereotyped conceptions of expected behavior developed and spread to include other, more distant hunting groups. This spread of what were originally regionally limited ethnic categories might have occurred because ethnicity had resulted in structured access to resources and had become a gateway to desirable commodities.

From the sixth century onwards, European history writers and geographers use the terms *skritiphinoi* or *scerefennae*, *scirdifinni*, which are Greek and Latin renderings of the Norse term *skriðfinner* ('skiing Finns'). The term refers to the Sámi's reputation as excellent skiers and competent hunters who pursue game in wintry conditions (see box text: The Naming of the Sámi). The fact that European authors use the new prefix *skrið-* (*skriti-/scere-*) to describe the Sámi suggests that they felt the need to distinguish the Sámi from the 'other' Finns. That this distinction did not appear in Europe until the sixth century seems to substantiate the belief that the ethnic differentiation and consolidation process between (Baltic-) Finns and Sámi had already reached a point in the early Iron Age that the ethnic demarcation line had both been acknowledged by the peoples of northern Fennoscandia and was known in Europe. The sixth century thus becomes a *terminus ante quem* for when this process was brought to a conclusion and had become common knowledge.

Yet, the generalization of Sámi identity to more extensive regions of northern Fennoscandia must have begun earlier (see chap. 2), which, among other things, later led to structured relationships also with Germanic/Norse groups. Much seems to suggest that the common original Sámi language was spoken throughout what was later known as the Sámi

settlement area (*Sápmi*) as early as the last centuries BC. In relation, it has been pointed out that hunting communities, in which people had no fixed abode and maintained contacts over long distances, had other and better reasons for maintaining linguistic unity than sedentary communities with poor communications.²⁹² All the same, the division of the individual Sámi dialects seems to have already begun during the first centuries AD.²⁹³ Although the relative share of proto-Scandinavian loan words is more or less equal in all the Sámi dialects, these loan words demonstrate irregularities that indicate that they were borrowed by Sámi dialects that had already been differentiated.²⁹⁴

The south Sámi dialect or language also contains a few archaic features that predate proto-Sámi and perhaps date from an early phase of the common, original Sámi-Finnic language.²⁹⁵ Proto-Sámi in what later became the South Sámi area therefore seems to have been in use for a substantial period of time, dating back to the last millennium BC. A form of Sámi identity—in the sense of the linguistic, social, and economic contrasting identity in relation to both (Baltic-) Finnish and Scandinavian (North Germanic) identity—may therefore have developed and spread to other parts of the Sámi settlement area already by the Early Iron Age.

However, this development does not prevent this identity from being articulated in different ways later, and in this case, from forming the basis for more limited sub- and ‘creolized’ identities.²⁹⁶ It is also worth noting that, with the exception of a language community and social and economic similarities, there is little in the Iron Age (up to the Viking Age) to suggest any conscious identifiers of Sámi ethnicity in the form of a common, pan-Sámi repertoire of symbols. As we shall see, this probably changed towards the end of the Viking Age.

3.10.3 *The Viking Age and Early Middle Ages: Intensified Trade and New Contacts*

As we have discussed in this chapter, interaction intensified between the Sámi and other groups during the Viking Age and the Early Middle Ages. Archaeological finds in the interior indicate a substantial increase in the

²⁹² Swadesh, rendered by Kleppe 1977, 43; Larsson 1998.

²⁹³ Sammallahti 1995; Strade 1997.

²⁹⁴ Sammallahti 1989, 7.

²⁹⁵ Strade 1997, 180.

²⁹⁶ Bruun 2007.



Fig. 23. Northern Fennoscandia and Northwest Russia in the Early Middle Ages.

hunting of wild reindeer, as well as other fur-bearing animals.²⁹⁷ The fur trade therefore seems to have been the motivating force behind these initiatives. The local Norsemen and the Finnish farming communities remained the principal participants in the increased exchange with the Sámi, although new agents also took an active part—agents who once again involved the Sámi in direct links with remote societies. These agents, representing both more institutionalized economic systems and state interests, thus introduced an entirely new dimension into the historical development of northern Fennoscandia.

An interesting characteristic of this long-distance contact is that, to a significant degree, it was directed towards the east. From around AD 800–900, it appears that Sámi hunting communities again became involved in relatively intensive trade with people further to the east, living in what today is northwest Russia and in part around the Baltic and the Gulf of Finland. This contact is primarily manifested by archaeological finds of ornaments found at sacrificial and burial sites throughout northern Fennoscandia. The oldest of these bronze ornaments may date as far back as the ninth century AD, and some of them are of eastern European origin, probably produced in the Perm-Volga area.²⁹⁸ In the early Viking Age, the ornaments originated in the kingdom of the East Bulgarians, where the most important town, Bulgar, was an important trading center for Arabs, Scandinavians, Slavs, and Finno-Ugric peoples.²⁹⁹

However, this early eastern European contact left relatively few traces in the material from the Sámi areas, and the vast majority of eastern ornaments are somewhat later and of more westerly origin. These came from western Finnish, the eastern Baltic (Estonia, Latvia) and northwest Russian or Karelian areas (Ladoga, Beloe Ozero, and the Vaga basin). The earliest date back to the ninth century, although the vast majority of them are tenth and eleventh century.³⁰⁰ Around 1000 AD, the primary eastern contact area appears to have been localized around Ladoga and the Gulf of Finland. The territory known from medieval Russian sources as Zavolochye, which covers the vast area between the rivers Onega, Dvina, and Vaga, also became extremely important.³⁰¹ During the Viking Age and the Early Middle Ages, the areas around the Gulf of Finland, Ladoga, and

²⁹⁷ See also Mikkelsen 1994.

²⁹⁸ Solberg 1909, 217; Schanche 2000, 162–163.

²⁹⁹ Odner 1983, 73.

³⁰⁰ Makarov 1994; Schanche 2000, 164–167; Wallerström 1995, 202–208.

³⁰¹ Makarov 1991.

Vaga developed into a dominant economic fur trading area. This growth was partly due to the expansion of principalities from the Upper Volga, which extended their sphere of economic strength to Zavolochye.³⁰² It was, however, primarily a result of the fact that the area surrounding the Gulf of Finland was, from the Early Middle Ages, in the process of being integrated into the sphere of influence of the city state of Novgorod. From its infancy in the ninth century AD, Novgorod had built up an extensive network by the end of the tenth century from which skins and furs were exported to the trading center Bulgar on the Volga to the east, to Byzantium in the south, and to Scandinavia and western Europe to the west. As the demand for luxury furs increased during the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and Novgorod at the same time experienced competition from other developing Slavonic polities, the city republic extended its trading area to the north, linking in Finno-Ugric tribes living around the Onega and in the Dvina valley. These groups were forced to pay tribute and supply furs to Novgorod for further export.

Novgorod's international trading network can thus be said to constitute an institutionalized framework, which enabled the Sámi to develop meaningful exchange relationships with their Finno-Ugric kinsmen to the east. Some of the brooches, amulets, and metal pendants that the Sámi received in exchange must have been produced specifically for such trading purposes by various Finno-Ugric groups connected with Novgorod. The furs that were supplied in return likely ended up in the trading center of Novgorod before they were re-exported to western Europe and other destinations.

However, the eastern trading systems were not the only participants in this new, intensified trade with the Sámi. From the west, Norwegian interests also asserted themselves. After the conflict with the Hålogaland chieftains over the right to the Finn tax and trade had eventually culminated in the eleventh century in victory for the monarchy, this tax became a royal right. This process actually happened at the same time that the slab-lined pits went out of use, which indicates discontinuance of local transactions based on blubber oil. This transformation was probably connected with the changes in the power balance between the monarchy and the northern Norwegian nobility. However, this development must be seen in the

³⁰² Ibid.; Wallerström 1995, 205.

light of the fact that the boom in the fur trade in the European market contributed to devaluing maritime products.³⁰³

These changes brought furs into the focus of Norwegian interests, as seen in the coin finds from the northern Swedish sacrificial sites. The greater part of these coins are Norwegian, dated from approximately 1050 to 1200 AD, with a slump from the middle of the twelfth century.³⁰⁴ The Norwegian coins found their way there during the reign of Harald 'the Ruthless' (Harald Hardråde, 1046–1066), probably the first Norwegian king to have made dealings with the Sámi a true royal privilege.³⁰⁵ From the end of the tenth century, older western coins (Danish, English, and German) ended up here as well, probably through contacts with the Norwegians. The coin finds at the sacrificial sites must be interpreted as an explicit expression of the monarchy's (and possibly also the Hålogaland nobility's) interest in furs in the north, with the income this provided by way of trade with the European market.³⁰⁶

The coins must somehow have been acceptable to the Sámi as a means of payment and to a certain extent, they could have used them themselves to buy commodities. However, there is much to indicate that the coins took on another meaning in Sámi society by being used not as money but as pendants/ornaments.³⁰⁷ Coins from the Viking Age and the Early Middle Ages have only been found in large quantities at three of the northern Swedish sacrificial sites, and are also known from two burial places in the South Sámi area (Langön and Vivalen).³⁰⁸ However, they are not found in any of the Sámi scree graves,³⁰⁹ which tends to indicate that the coins were used in special ritual contexts, such as the previously mentioned silver hoard find from Haukøy in the northern Troms municipality of Skjervøy. Coins were also found in lesser numbers in other Norwegian silver hoard finds, although apart from the Haukøy find, all are located from Salten and southward and the coins never appear here as pendants.³¹⁰

³⁰³ Henriksen 1995, 90–93.

³⁰⁴ Zachrisson 1984; Wallerström 1995, 188–189.

³⁰⁵ Skaare 1974, 379; Sveaas Andersen 1977, 149–164.

³⁰⁶ Wallerström 1995, 199.

³⁰⁷ Zachrisson 1984.

³⁰⁸ Zachrisson 1997, 225.

³⁰⁹ Compare with Schanche 2000, 195.

³¹⁰ Sjøvold 1974, 327.

3.10.4 *Stress and Standardization of Cultural Expression:
The Consolidation of Sámi Ethnicity*

The Viking Age and the Early Middle Ages were periods during which the hunting culture became 'visible' once more in the archaeological material. In a similar fashion to the Early Metal Age, the Sámi area was drawn into a network of contacts with remote areas, which, in line with the reasoning above, may explain something of this new visibility. It is nonetheless important to acknowledge that the contacts established at this time with both eastern and western societies were of an entirely different character and extent than those known from the Early Metal Age. Rather, during this period the Sámi communities experienced direct contacts with representatives of remote communities and economic systems far more frequently. They had to increase their production considerably in order to satisfy demand in the European hide market, which may have led to further specialization and dependency on external products. Scarcity of resources may have aggravated internal conflicts, both inside and between different hunting communities, especially as regards territorial rights. The Sámi, who in the Iron Age had largely kept to their own local redistributive systems, were now drawn into a political-economic rivalry at high levels over the resources they produced. The economic and political changes in the east and the west, along with the conversion of Norse society to Christianity, meant that the Sámi found themselves in a far more economically and culturally stressed situation than had previously been the case.³¹¹

Parallel with this development, there is evidence of an extensive cultural consolidation—and ethnic manifestation—within the Sámi area: during the Viking Age and the Early Middle Ages, the scree grave custom spread throughout a large part of northern Fennoscandia. At the same time, other ritual practices such as bear burials spread and became standardized, which also involved the emergence of metal sacrifices and the depositing of silver hoards. Moreover, settlement organization was formalized throughout large parts of the interior, in the form of houses and hearths laid out in rows. This growth of widely dispersed and formalized manifestations was likely related to social, economic, and religious changes among the neighboring peoples. The fur trade demanded intensification of production in the form of wild reindeer trapping and small

³¹¹ Olsen 2000b.

game hunting, and probably resulted in a more distinct marking of territorial rights. Stricter definition of hunting areas may have contributed to the formalization of the *siida* as a territorial unit within Sámi society (see chap. 4.3).³¹²

However, pressure existed not only on economy and production but also on central cultural and social values within Sámi society. This pressure may explain why the homogenization of Sámi culture to such a high degree seems to have been channeled to the religious sphere and to ritual manifestations. Material, ritual forms of expression that had previously had a long history but within a geographically limited distribution were now deemed suitable as symbols among most Sámi-speaking groups, and can be regarded as part of a process of religious and ethnic consolidation.³¹³ The Viking Age and Early Middle Ages can therefore be considered as a period in which several cultural characteristics previously subject to regional limitation were generalized, spread, and incorporated into a common material repertoire which was used to express Sámi identity/Sámi ethnic affiliation—such that it ultimately became part of the overall cultural complex that in later centuries was perceived as ‘Sámi.’

THE SÁMI LANGUAGE

Sámi belongs to the Finno-Ugric family of languages, which, together with Samoyedic languages, constitute the Uralic family of languages. Among the Finno-Ugric languages, Sámi is most closely related to Finnish and other languages belonging to the Balto-Finnic group, such as Estonian, Karelian, and Vepsian. Sámi is also more distantly related to the Volga-Finnic languages, which include Mordvin and Mari (Cheremis).

Already from about 800 AD, there was a distinction between the following Sámi dialects: South Sámi, Ume Sámi, Pite Sámi, Lule Sámi, North Sámi, Enare Sámi, East Sámi, Akkala Sámi, Kildin Sámi, and Ter Sámi (see fig. B). The character of the dialect differences is such that the population in two adjoining areas can understand each other with some difficulty, whereas the potential for mutual understanding rapidly diminishes with increasing distance. Dialect differences have also been compared to the mutual differences exhibited by the Balto-Finnic languages. Internal Sámi dialect and cultural differences, to a large degree, intersect the borders between the nation-states.

³¹² Fossum 2008; Hedman and Olsen 2009.

³¹³ See Odner 1983, 60–65.

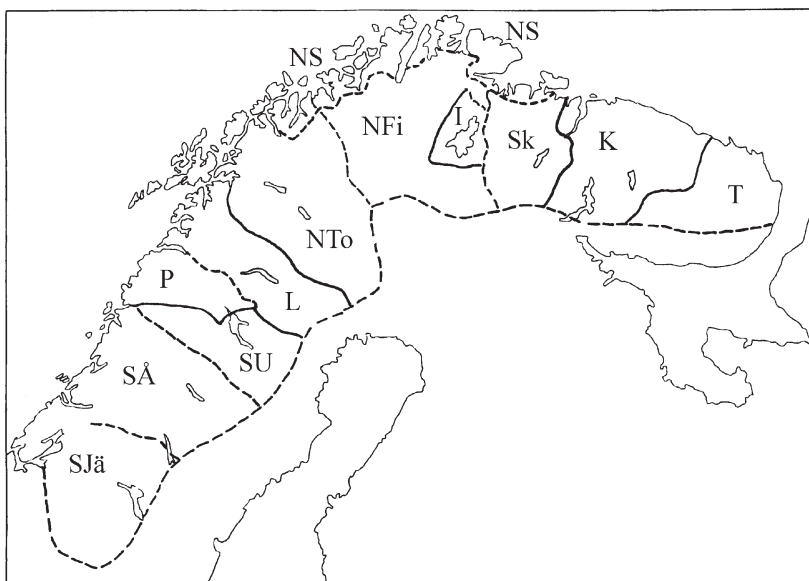


Fig. B. The Sámi dialect areas (from Korhonen 1981).

Linguists have thoroughly debated as to when and for what reason Sámi or proto-Sámi broke away and became established as an independent language. Was Sámi separated out during the same diversification process that led to the Balto-Finnic languages? Or did separation occur later from a forerunner of modern Finnish? Today, most linguists concur that Sámi developed on the basis of a common Finno-Sámi proto-language, from which the precursors of both Sámi and the Balto-Finnic languages went their separate ways (see fig. C). Moreover, what we call this language is also important; it used to be referred to as 'early pre-Finnish,' but this designation had implications for what one considered to be the main character of this original language. A more neutral and adequate designation is therefore the 'common Finno-Sámi proto-language' or 'the proto-language'. Thus, Sámi is put on an equal footing with the Balto-Finnic languages.

This way of analyzing the relationship between the languages arises out of the tendency to operate—consciously or subconsciously—with a genealogical tree model of the development of languages. When linguists successively became aware of the lexical, semantic, and morphological similarities and parallels between languages, they could then group them together and link them back to the languages with which they shared common origins. Linguists then went on to construct designations for the common original languages, which were extinct but must have existed because of the ties shown by the later languages. In this way, they proceeded towards certain 'primeval' or 'proto-languages,' such as 'proto-Volga-Finnic,' 'proto-Finno-Permian,' etc. In the traditional Sámi vocabulary, for example, one finds that some 700 basic stems recur in both the

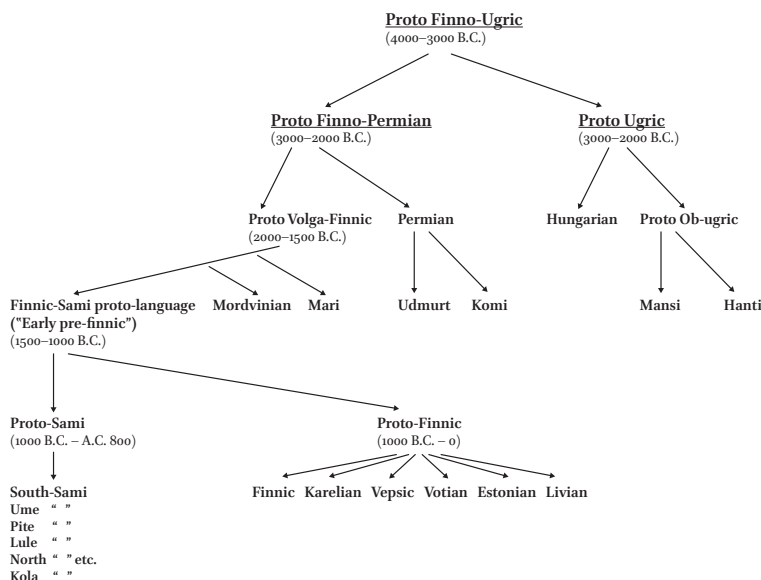


Fig. C. "The family tree model" of Finno-Ugric language historical development (from M. Korhonen 1981).

Finno-Ugric and Samoyed languages, which means that they can be considered to date back to the common Uralic period (ca. 4500 BC). About 160 words are assumed to date back to the Finno-Ugric period, and some 280 stems recur in both Sámi and the Balto-Finnic languages, such that it is reasonable to believe that they date back to the original common Sámi-Finnic tongue.^d Exactly when the different languages split up has been calculated partly on the basis of general linguistic considerations based on the rate of development of language changes and partly by analyzing cultural complexes and processes for which the archaeologists thought they had evidence at the time of the analysis of their material.

However, the genealogical tree model instinctively leads one to think of languages as separate, isolated entities, which go their own ways and develop separately after branching off has taken place. Once a certain common vocabulary and structural similarities with the other languages that are assumed to stem from the same 'proto-language' have been established, the emphasis of the genealogical tree model is on *divergences*. The model is not able to incorporate processes in which languages influence each other and to some extent *converge*, as we know living languages do. The genealogical tree model must therefore be regarded as inadequate and has been the object of sharp criticism.^e

^d Sammallahti 1998, 117-125.

^e Sammallahti 1989; Larsson 1998.

According to the Finnish linguist Pekka Sammallahti, if we are to take an image at all from botany it ought to be the mangrove bush with all its diverging and converging branches because languages can influence each other in different ways, both through the assimilation of borrowed words and by providing each other with structural traits such as suffixes and markers of various morphological categories. Therefore, a model of language development ought actually to be three-dimensional, according to Sammallahti:

Thus, an ideal model of representing the relationship between cognate languages would have to take two things into account: firstly, the vertical or genetic divergences of languages, and secondly, the horizontal relationships between language communities that may accelerate divergences or bring about convergence as a counter-force to divergence. The model should, in other words, be three-dimensional with time as the third dimension, e.g., some form of 'bar' model analogical to the bar graphics in computers.^f

Some researchers have therefore attempted to describe the relationship between the different Finno-Ugric and Balto-Finnic languages using circles or sectors that overlap each other partly and to varying degrees (see fig. D). An image of this kind can also be perceived as a projection in the horizontal plane of a three-dimensional model. In a chronological perspective, different types of innovation will occur at different times within each of the language communities illustrated by the circles. As regards the Sámi dialect groups that developed later, it has, for example, been shown that North Sámi has gone furthest as regards to innovations in certain fields, thus parting company from more southern and eastern dialects. These, on the other hand, have gone through other kinds of innovations.

Mutual influence in the form of linguistic convergence and borrowing of different terms has thus always taken place. In this case, it is necessary to distinguish between different age levels both for those languages that are borrowed from and for those that borrow. Many truly ancient Indo-European words loaned by Sámi are also found in a number of the other Uralic languages, Samoyed included, which means that the borrowing must have occurred at a very early stage when the Uralic language community still existed. These included, for instance, the old Indo-European word for 'name', of which related forms not only occur in older and newer western European languages, but are also found in Nenets (Yurak-Samoyed) in the form *n'im/n'um*, in Finnish as *nimi* and in Sámi as *nomme/namma*. Similarly, there are Indo-Aryan and proto-Iranian loanwords that were not borrowed until after the breakdown of the Uralic community, while the proto Finno-Ugric language unit still existed. The word for 'honey' (**médhu*) may serve as an example here. Not only is it found in Sámi as *miehta*, but also in Hungarian as *méz* and in Finnish as *mesi* (cf. Russian *mёд*, Norwegian *mjød*, and English 'mead'). In the same way, there are early Balto-Slavic loanwords borrowed at an even later stage, either into the common Finno-Sámi proto-language or early Sámi.

^f Sammallahti 1989, 4.

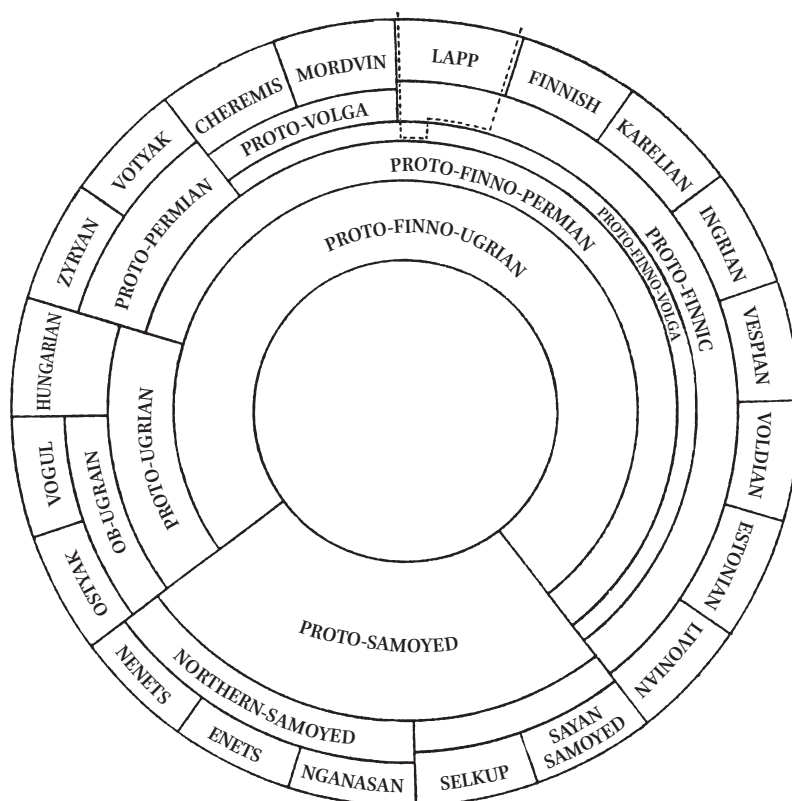


Fig. D. P. Hajdú's circle-shaped development model for the Uralic languages (from Uibopuu 1988).

This kind of analysis of loanwords of different periods can also be used to elucidate when and how the common Sámi language came into existence and thus shed light on the processes of interaction that led to the emergence of a separate ethnic identity. Below, we shall refer to some more recent points of view expressed by the linguists Pekka Sammallahti and Norbert Strade in relation to the prehistoric linguistic differentiation processes that occurred in what is now Finland. Their reasoning shares common features with Odner's hypothesis of cultural differentiation and stereotyping among what originally were relatively heterogeneous hunter-gatherer groups in Fennoscandia. As in his model, they too emphasize interaction between different groups (in this case, different language communities) as the basis of, and catalyst for, processes of change. At the same time, they presuppose a high degree of demographic and cultural continuity from Stone Age society down to historical time.

The oldest group of loan words in the Sámi-Finnic common language are, as mentioned previously, words of proto-Baltic origin, i.e., from the language spoken by the predecessors of present-day speakers of Latvian and Lithuanian. This influence is assumed to have taken place shortly after 2000 BC, at a time when the common Finno-Sámi proto-language was probably spoken in southern Finland. Since the individual Balto-Finnic languages had not yet developed, the loanwords demonstrate a relatively even distribution among these later languages, although with a certain predominance in the northern group. This may indicate that the main area in which cultural contact took place lay to the north of the Gulf of Finland. Among the borrowed expressions were the word for 'nephew', 'daughter', 'companion', and 'company'/society/community'.^g Words associated with animal husbandry and farming were 'goat', 'ox', 'wool', 'seed', and 'barley'.

The next group consists of loanwords of early Germanic (proto-Germanic) origin which are believed to have been borrowed by the Balto-Finnic languages around the middle of the second century BC. In this case as well, cultural contact is believed to have been most pronounced north of the Gulf of Finland.^h This group consists, among others, of words for 'grown man', 'guest', 'shoe', 'fat', 'sail', and 'iron'.ⁱ Linguists believe that cultural contacts at this time were so intense that one may speak of a sort of coexistence between Indo-European speaking and early Finnish-speaking groups in western and southern parts of what is now Finland. From the same point in time, the original Finno-Sámi language is assumed to have started differentiating in two directions, into what would later become proto-Finnish and proto-Sámi, respectively. Linguists prefer to see these two processes as a whole. The close contact with Indo-European groups may have started a combined linguistic and cultural differentiation process among the pre-Finnish and pre-Sámi populations, with parts of the population also adopting farming and animal husbandry techniques from the Indo-Europeans while the others remained hunter-gatherers.^j While the former became the ancestors of the Finlanders (proto-Finns), the latter emerged as the ancestors of the Sámi (proto-Sámi). According to this view then, linguistic differentiation is linked to a more general, extensive cultural differentiation process with its point of departure in a common original population. Norbert Strade has summed up this hypothesis as follows:

The Balto-Finnic and Sámi languages have their roots in a common proto form. The ultimate division of proto-Finnish into two different language forms is to be dated to the time between 1500 and 1000 BC, a period during which Finnish was subject to powerful Germanic influence. If one links the archaeological material to the linguistic-historic finds, one arrives at the result that the economic differentiation between hunters and gatherers on the one hand and farmers/herdsmen on the other, led to an ethnic and linguistic differentiation.^k

^g Sammallahti 1989, 5; 1998, 127.

^h Sammallahti 1989, 5.

ⁱ Sammallahti 1998, 128.

^j Strade 1997.

^k Strade 1992, 575; author's translation from German.

Thus, according to these linguists, this adaptation and linguistic differentiation is supposed to have started in southwestern Finland around the middle of the second millennium BC and to have given rise to segregated cultural and linguistic complexes which can be identified with the ancestors of peoples who became the Finns and the Sámi. This view seems to concur relatively well with the archaeological material, as discussed above. Thus, we should probably look for the emergence of a separate Sámi identity at some stage during the last millennium BC, although this identity probably came into existence on the basis of cultural preconditions, glimpses of which could already be traced in the form of 'cultural spheres' in the previous millennium.

The second millennium BC may therefore be regarded as a formative period, during which a number of cultural and linguistic traits, which later blended together in the construction of Sámi identity, were present to varying degrees among the dispersed hunter-gatherers in Fennoscandia—although the combination familiar to us from later periods had not yet occurred. Even if linguistic developments in the direction of 'proto-Finnish' and 'proto-Sámi' were proceeding in the southwest Finnish area at this time, they did not necessarily have any impact on the hunter-gatherer groups in other parts of Fennoscandia.

External influence on the Sámi continued after the first century AD. Some 3,000 loan words of Scandinavian origin are known, of which about 200 were borrowed from proto-Scandinavian, that is to say, the language form prevalent before substantial changes in the Scandinavian languages set in between 500 and 800 AD. The largest group of loan words in modern Sámi, however, is of Finnish origin. A large number of lexical terms have been borrowed over the last few centuries. Moreover, the eastern Sámi dialects on the Russian side have borrowed many Russian words, primarily from the Late Middle Ages onwards. Since many of the proto-Scandinavian loan words have made their way into all Sámi dialects, from South Sámi in the south to Ter Sámi in the east, it has been assumed that the common Sámi language unit was not broken up before the end of the proto-Scandinavian period, around the year 800 AD.

Further development in the direction of different dialects, on the other hand, seems to have proceeded rapidly until the end of the Middle Ages. The oldest existing sample of written Sámi is a list of Kildin Sámi words and expressions recorded by an English seafaring voyager in the 1550s. The language in this list does not differ to any appreciable extent from the modern dialects in the area. This therefore suggests that the differentiation into the separated dialects as we know them today had already been completed by that time.

Sources: Hajdú 1975; Korhonen 1981; Larsson 1998; Sammallahti 1989, 1998; Strade 1992, 1997; Uibopuu 1988.

CHAPTER FOUR

COLONIZATION, CONTACTS, AND CHANGE 1200–1550

4.1 INTRODUCTION

During most of the Iron Age and Early Middle Ages, the settlement borders between the Sámi and neighboring people seem to have been relatively stable. This territorial balance can be seen as both a condition for and a reflection of the reciprocity and cooperation, which to that point had characterized the relationship between the ethnic groups. Even though changed political and religious conditions from the end of the Viking Age offered a more strained and asymmetrical relationship, the settlement borders were still essentially observed. During the High and Late Middle Ages, however, the territorial balance was upset at the same time as the relations between the Sámi and the surrounding peoples changed.

This new situation was due to changes on several levels. First, a direct colonization of Sámi land took place with neighboring groups settling permanently in previous Sámi areas and introducing their own economy and administration. Secondly, the Sámi area became far more integrated into economic and political networks controlled by powers outside of northern Fennoscandia. A third factor that influenced ethnic relationships was Christianity's steadily stronger hold on non-Sámi communities. The consequence was not only the loss of the important cognitive and ritual ties to the Sámi that had existed earlier in the neighboring groups' pre-Christian religion, but also that Christianization and church building became an important strategy in the struggles to gain political control over Sámi areas. These three factors, colonization, integration, and Christianization, did not take place at the same time and they were subject to significant regional variation. From the Late Middle Ages, however, they constituted a new set of interacting conditions that most Sámi in one way or another had to relate to.

In this chapter, we will look more closely at how Sámi societies mastered these new conditions. We will focus on which responses, adaptations, and strategies were implemented on the Sámi side, both to meet these new demands and to utilize the possibilities the new situation created. First, however, we must shed light on how the social and ethnic

landscape of northern Fennoscandia changed under these new political and economic conditions.

4.2 HEGEMONY—TRIBUTE—COLONIZATION

As we have seen, the Sámi had intimate economic, social, and religious contacts with surrounding peoples throughout the Iron Age and the Early Middle Ages. Although this relationship could involve asymmetrical features, such as the use of military superiority in some contexts to put pressure on the Sámi, practical exchanges often had a complementary and equal character. The Sámi were supplied with necessary goods or culturally valuable products in exchange for equally valuable wilderness products, such as fur. Over time, mutual dependency developed and we have suggested that this was also reinforced through social and religious ties. Maintaining good relations with the Norwegian elite as well as with the Baltic peoples in Finland and northwest Russia was of great importance to the Sámi.

Until the Early Middle Ages, the exchange of goods and the negotiation of social relations with the Sámi were managed by relatively autonomous local elites. During the Middle Ages, these local elites lost much of their independence and power in favor of state or proto-state authorities located outside the local field of ethnic interaction. Two central catchwords that illuminate these states' power strategies are hegemony and (collection of) tribute. These indicate the means by which the Scandinavian kingdoms and the proto-state Slavic principalities to the east tried to integrate the Sámi and their resource areas into their own spheres of influence. This development must be seen in connection with basic changes in the trade systems of northern Europe and northwest Russia, where, in particular, the Hanseatic trade network came to have great influence on the directions that the fur trade would take.

In addition, direct colonization of what had previously been Sámi areas occurred. In part, this colonization was brought about by purely economic incentives and partly by political motives. Economic and political incentives as a rule operated in tandem and were often supported by religious means and religious rhetoric. Before we take a closer look at how the Sámi related to colonization and the new economic and political reality, we will discuss the main features of state expansion as it transpired in different ways in the west, south, and east.

4.2.1 *Political Hegemony and Tribute in the West*

The state unification struggles of the tenth and eleventh centuries ended with the appropriation by the Norwegian monarchy of the northern Norwegian chieftains' old rights to *finnkaup* (purchasing furs from the Sámi) and *finnskatt* (collecting tax). However, as late as the mid-eleventh century, when a new consolidation of the monarchy occurred, the outcome was still unclear. The protagonists of a unified Norwegian monarchy competed with the heirs of the Hålogaland chieftains, both for control of the fur export and for political domination over the country. The latter were now called Earls of Lade (*ladejarler*), since they had expanded southward and settled on the landed estate of Lade on the Trondheim fjord. Their kin and allies, however, stayed on in northern Norway taking care of their interests in the fur trade. During certain periods, the Lade Earls were allied with the Danish kings and ruled the country as their earls. From the latter half of the tenth century, the leaders of the Norwegian kingdom apparently took a more offensive position. They aimed at winning control over the Hålogaland chieftains' entire sphere of interest, which reached from Namdalen all the way to the White Sea. King Harald Eiriksson (ca. 960 to ca. 970) seems to have been given the nickname *Gråfell* (grey cloak) because of his interest in furs from the people in the north. Both he and his successors engaged in trading and harrying expeditions to the White Sea. Either the kings participated themselves or they supplied resources for the journeys carried out by others.

A royal amendment from the beginning of the twelfth century suggests that the Norwegian monarchy demanded exclusive rights to all fur trade north of Namdalen sometime in the first half of the eleventh century—either as early as Olav Haraldsson's period of rule (1015–1030) or in the period immediately following. At this time, the kings had vanquished the last descendants of the Earls of Lade. In line with increasing Norwegian settlement along the coastal areas, the Norwegian kingdom steadily gained a foothold further north. This was expressed primarily through the establishment of legal districts such as local assemblies and district divisions, the establishment of a system of defense based on conscription (*leidang*), and, finally, through the expansion of Norwegian church organization. In the eleventh century, it seems that the northern part of the Norwegian state comprised the present Nordland county, while South Troms constituted a sort of border area. In the course of the twelfth century, the border of the kingdom was extended further north and around 1200 it reached Malangen.

Thus, in the thirteenth century, the Norse settlement area of northern Norway had become fully incorporated into the Norwegian state. However, the Norwegian state also extended its influence into the adjacent Sámi settlement areas. These areas, known to the Norse as 'Finnmørk,' extended much further than the boundaries of the modern Norwegian county of the same name. Finnmørk was depicted as "a vast wilderness" that bordered the Norwegian kingdom. According to the *Historia Norvegiae* written in the middle of the twelfth century, however, the Norwegian kings maintained that the Sámi who lived there were subject to them and that they were liable to pay tribute. The term 'tribute' indicates enforced payments based on an unequal power relationship. This means that the Sámi situation contrasts with what happened when the population of Iceland and the other 'tax lands' in the west accepted the Norwegian king's hegemony and consented to pay tax through organized, collective decisions.¹ The organization of the 'Finn expeditions,' i.e. combined trade and taxation expeditions to the Sámi, were no longer a privilege of the northern Norwegian chieftains. Instead, their organization was turned over to the kingdom's local representatives in the districts, royal vassals (or district chiefs), and sheriffs. Some of the king's men would be given the task for a certain number of years, but they could also be appointed for life. Throughout the first part of the Middle Ages, it seems that the 'Finn expeditions' were a main source of income for the Norwegian kingdom. Among other evidence, this impression comes from an extensive legal case from the first half of the twelfth century, where King Sigurd Jerusalem-farer (*Jorsalfare*) raised charges against his own royal vassal at Steigen, Sigurd Ranesson, who had been commissioned with a Finn expedition as a grant from an earlier king. Sigurd Jerusalem-farer claimed that the vassal had failed to fulfill the agreement concerning the division of the 'Finn tax.' The net worth of the 'Finn tax' and the 'Finn purchase' was then estimated at 120 marks of silver, and possibly even twice as much, but there was a disputed claim on the part of the king.²

Toward the end of the High Middle Ages, however, the Norwegian monarchy was less engaged in the fur trade. Trade and taxation expeditions into the Sámi areas seem to have ended. While the historic sources from the Early Middle Ages constantly repeat that the chieftains and, later, the king's sheriffs "went into the mountains" to demand tax and

¹ See Holmsen 1977.

² Ibid.

to conduct trade with the Sámi, there are fewer mentions of this in the High Middle Ages. The last Bjarmeland expedition led by vassals took place in 1222 and the last time a chieftain (Gissur Galle) set out on a Finn expedition on behalf of the king was in 1310–11. The latter expedition was probably an unsuccessful attempt to reestablish an already discontinued institution. Another indication of this changing attitude is that the quantity of Norwegian coins found at the large Sámi sacrificial sites in the northern Swedish interior decreases after 1150 and ceases completely around 1200.³

In part, this may be due both to the kingdom and the Church taking a greater interest in the profit from other types of activities that could finance their institutional building, primarily agriculture and fishing. Through the conveyance of agricultural property and the development of the tax system (converted conscription, tithes), mechanisms were established in the High Middle Ages that channeled the surplus from farming, animal husbandry, and fishing to the central powers. Decreasing Norwegian interest in the fur trade may also be related to the emergence of new export routes and centers for the fur trade in the east and south. From the thirteenth century, the Karelians, who operated as intermediaries for Novgorod, took a very central role in eastern trade. The Norwegian kingdom tried to restrain the expansion of the Karelians and Novgorod, mainly through an increased military presence in the north. Nevertheless, a certain export of furs to the west outside the system controlled by the Norwegian king may still have occurred, probably mostly from Coastal Sámi areas. It is unclear who was behind this export. In part it may have taken place through private Norwegian interests, but it cannot be excluded that some of the export at this time was carried out by a social elite within Sámi society—the ‘Finn kings.’⁴ Customs rolls from east English ports dated to the early fourteenth century contain records of imported fur goods, both reindeer and bear pelts along with gray squirrel and weasel (ermine) pelts. While the reindeer and bear pelts seem to have come from Norway, the preponderance of gray squirrel probably came by ship from the Baltic. Some, however, came on Norwegian ships, and could have originated from Coastal Sámi areas.⁵

³ Wallerström 1995, 188–192.

⁴ Bratrein 2001; see also chapter chap. 4.5.

⁵ Nedkvitne 1977; Fjellström 1983.

4.2.2 *Trade and Taxation from the East: Novgorod's Sphere of Interest*

During the Early Middle Ages, the aristocratic city-state Novgorod just north of Lake Ilmen grew into one of the most significant trade centers for furs in northern Europe. As previously mentioned, the city had a central position within an extensive trading network, reaching eastward to the Bulgar junction on the Volga, southward to Byzantium, and westward to Scandinavia and western Europe. Largely as a result of the Hanseatic League's establishment in the Baltic, Novgorod began expanding its field of interest to the north and northeast. Here, there were extensive hunting grounds that could deliver precisely the type of luxury furs that were in demand at this time in western Europe.⁶ Novgorod established control over the settlement areas of a number of peoples of Balto-Finnic and Permian-Finnic origin by building up a network of administrative support and fortified trading stations, the *pogosts*. The main function of these trade outposts was to ensure that the local population submitted to Novgorod's authority and paid the city-state tribute.

As such, Novgorod's claims had much in common with the Norwegian kingdom's demands for tribute from the Sámi. One source from 1137 shows that the city-state at this time had established permanent bases along the rivers Onega, Sukhona, and Vaga, as well as along the Dvina river itself.⁷ By 1187 at the latest, Novgorod had established taxation of the population as far to the northeast as the Pechora river.⁸ In the course of the twelfth century, the Russians from Novgorod probably reached the White Sea, where their settlements at first were concentrated around the mouths of the Dvina and Onega rivers as indicated by a silver hoard found close to Arkhangel'sk.⁹ It is likely that at this time or somewhat later, this Russian population had started trade and hunting expeditions to the Sámi areas along the southeast coast of the Kola Peninsula, which they called the 'Ter coast.' It is also possible that Novgorod's tax collecting from the Kola Sámi had come about as early as 1216,¹⁰ but this is uncertain because chronicle information from this year is ambiguous and could just as well be read *tverskij dannik*, i.e., the designations of a tax collector in the town of Tver', as *terskij dannik*, i.e., a tax collector in the Ter territory.¹¹ From

⁶ Martin 1986.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Koht 1962.

⁹ Jasinski and Ovsianikov 1993.

¹⁰ Ušakov 1971; Lukjančenko 1971, 8.

¹¹ Rahbæk Schmidt 1964, 79.



Fig. 24. Novgorod's five administrative districts ("fifths") and network of fortified strongholds for trade and tax collection. The map shows the delimitation of common taxation areas, between Sweden and Novgorod and between Norway and Novgorod.

the middle of the thirteenth century at the latest, the southeast Kola coast had been incorporated into Novgorod's sphere of interest on a more regular basis. Several Russian sources from the 1260s refer to the Ter land as "Novgorod's land" or taxation area.¹² In 1294, the right of the Russian Dvina inhabitants to conduct trading and hunting expeditions to the Ter coast was regulated and confirmed by the Grand Duke Andrej Aleksandrovič. Toward the end of the Middle Ages (from the second half of the fifteenth century) a Sámi border at the river Pjalitsa on the southeast Kola coast is mentioned. Apparently, it divided a resource area subject to the Dvina inhabitants' use west of the river and the Sámi's areas to the east and north, while the river itself was divided.¹³ Further east at the White Sea, in the Dvina delta, but 100 km from the ocean, the town of Kholmogory grew to become an important regional hub in the High Middle Ages, with administrative, trade, and handicraft activity.

For the Sámi and for northern trade contacts on the whole, it was significant that through this expansion Novgorod established ties to Finno-Ugric speaking peoples that traditionally had maintained close exchange relations with the Sámi. First of all, this applied to the population in the region of Zavolochye, i.e., the territory around the impact areas of the rivers Onega, Dvina, and its tributary Vaga, north of the river Sukhona (see figs. 23 and 24). This Russian province name simply means 'the land beyond the isthmuses,' since these wooded stretches formed the watershed between the great central Russian rivers and the rivers that run northwards to the White Sea.¹⁴ As we saw in chapter 3, many of the bronze ornaments from the Viking Era and Early Middle Ages that have been found in Sámi graves and at sacrificial sites in northern Fennoscandia were produced here and in bordering areas to the southwest.¹⁵ From the Russian side, the people here were called *Čud'* or *Chudes*, a blanket term that the Slavs used for all their Finnish-speaking neighbors. Ethnically speaking, the preponderance of this population may have consisted of the Balto-Finnic people, the Vepsians (Old Russian *ves'*).¹⁶ In line with the building up of Novgorod's trading network, the Vepsians seem to have assumed an intermediary function in the fur trade. It is also reasonable to assume that it was these Finnish and Permian *Chude* groups that

¹² Ovsiannikov 1993, 13; Eidlitz Kuoljok 1991, 60, 72.

¹³ Ovsiannikov 1993, 11.

¹⁴ Makarov 1992; Wallerström 1995, 202–205.

¹⁵ Makarov 1991; Schanche 2000, 180.

¹⁶ Eidlitz Kuoljok 1991, 22–24.

were referred to from the Scandinavian side as Biarmians in the sources from the Early Middle Ages, and whom the Norse chieftains encountered during their expeditions to the south coast of the White Sea and to the lower part of the Dvina river valley.¹⁷

WHO WERE THE BIARMIANS?

According to the oldest sources from the western area (Ohthere, *Heimskringla*, *Haakon Haakonsson's saga*) the Biarmians' settlement area seems to have consisted of the south coast of the White Sea together with the northern parts of the Dvina valley. Yet, to what degree the Biarmians can be identified with any of the later known peoples in northern Fennoscandia, and whether they can actually be considered as a separate ethnic group in the Middle Ages, has been extensively debated—as well as the very etymology behind the designation. With a point of departure in Ohthere's observation that "he thought that the Finns and Biarmians spoke almost the same language," the following alternatives have been put forward as possible identifications with earlier and later peoples:

- the Permian-speaking ancestors of today's Komi people, or
- one of the later-known Balto-Finnic speaking peoples either the Vots (southern *Chudes*), the Vepsians (northern *Chudes*) or the Karelians.

Etymologically, the name 'Biarmians' has been connected both with the Balto-Finnic word *perä-maa*, meaning 'distant, out-of-the-way land', and the Komi-Syryenian word *parma*, meaning 'wilderness, wasteland'.^a

Through the studies of the Finnish researcher Martti Haavio and the Norwegian historian Håkon Stang, it now seems likely that the Biarmians should be identified with the Balto-Finnic people the Vepsians, in Old Russian sources referred to as *ves* and in Arabic as *Wīsū*. The Vepsians' original settlement area seems to have been the areas between Ladoga, Onega, and Beloe Ozero (see fig. 23). From this core area, however, they are supposed to have penetrated northwards and eastwards and established themselves in the Dvina river basin, perhaps as early as in the tenth century, but certainly in the course of the eleventh century. In Russian, this area was called Zavolochye, i.e. 'the land beyond the isthmuses' or 'beyond the watershed'. During Novgorod's expansion to the north and northeast during the twelfth century, though, the Vepsians were also subjected to the city-state.

¹⁷ Haavio 1965; Stang 1977.

^a Carpelan 1993.

From the Russian (Novgorod's) side, the Vepsians could be called *Čud* or *Chudes*.^b This designation was, nevertheless, not only used for the Vepsians, but also for a series of Balto-Finnic peoples associated with the Russians such as the Vots and the Estonians to the west. Therefore, directional specifications or landscape names, like Zavolochye, were used to distinguish between the various folk groups.

The Russian *Chude* designation was thus a blanket term that did not give any precise ethnic identification itself. Perhaps we can venture to consider the Norwegian Biarmians as a similar blanket category? In that case, we ought to give up trying to connect the Biarmians exclusively to any later-known peoples, and rather understand the term on a level with 'Birkarls', i.e., as an amalgamation of trading peoples who took care of special economic functions vis-à-vis the Sámi as well as Norwegians and Russians, and who played a role as intermediaries within the trading network that gradually came to be dominated by Novgorod. Since 'Biarmians' is to be understood as a functional term, from a special economic activity, this group could well have included several population elements with different ethnic origins. Alongside Vepsians, the group could also have included Karelians and Permic peoples who were the forerunners of today's Komi. According to the Estonian linguist Valev Uibopuu, loanwords from Vepsian and Karelian into Komi-Syryenian indicate that these peoples were integrated in an extensive trading network during the Middle Ages.^c

Such a point of view also allows for the ethnic composition of the group 'Biarmians' to have changed over time: the Vepsian population element might have been strong in the Early Middle Ages, while the Karelian grew during the High Middle Ages and became dominant in the Late Middle Ages—in keeping with the Karelians' expansion toward the White Sea area.

Sources: Bergsland 1975; Carpelan 1993; Haavio 1967; Melnikova and Petrukhin 1990–91; Sjögren 1861; Stang 1977; Uibopuu 1988.

From the thirteenth century, the eastern Karelians were also drawn into Novgorod's sphere of interest, but they seem nevertheless to have maintained a certain degree of independence. Over time, Karelian merchants came to represent Novgorod's economic interests in the west to a high degree, and until the end of the fifteenth century, they completely dominated east-west trade in the interior of northern Fennoscandia. From their

^b Etymologically, the actual designation *Čud* may have been derived from a presumed pre-Slavic form *tjudjo* 'foreign', which in turn may have been borrowed from Gothic *þiudā* or Germanic *þeudo* 'people'. Cf. Old Norwegian *þjóð*, f. 'folk, nation'. See Melnikova and Petrukhin 1990–91, 223–225. Even if this may have been the original etymology, new and special connotations may have been added to the designation as a consequence of interaction between Slavic and Finno-Ugric peoples.

^c Uibopuu 1988.

original settlement area west and north of Ladoga ('the Karelian promontory'), they had already expanded in the twelfth century to the north, northeast, and northwest (see fig. 23). What drew the Karelian colonists northward was primarily the hunting areas, the inland fishing, and the bog iron ores. During the High Middle Ages, the Karelians also colonized the southeast regions of the Sámi settlement area west of the White Sea. In the Novgorodian vocabulary, these Sámi areas were designated as 'forest lappland' (*lešaja lop*), in contrast to the Kola Peninsula which was called 'the wild lappland' (*dikaja lop*). During the High Middle Ages, Karelian settlement in the areas west of the White Sea (later East Karelia) became so extensive that the coastal landscape was called the 'Karelian shore' (*Korelskij bereg*). The Karelians are supposed to have taken possession of large territories in this area, and according to old Russian custom, as landowners they were also considered to 'own' the inhabitants of the land, something which gave them the right to demand fees (*prazga*) from the Sámi.¹⁸ This corresponded to the tribute Novgorod demanded from 'their' hunting people further east. From the end of the High Middle Ages, the southern coast of the Kola Peninsula also seems to have had a permanent Karelian settlement. A chronicle note from 1419 mentions a town by the river Varzuga as "the Karelian *pogost*."

After the peace treaty concluded between Sweden and Novgorod at Nöteborg/Orekhovec in 1323, the Karelians (East Karelians) formally became part of the Novgorod area and eastern, Orthodox Christianity (see p. 26). Yet already from the thirteenth century, they were to some extent subject to Novgorod and had to pay tax from their income from the Sámi. Karelian merchants were attached to Novgorod's network and through the Late Middle Ages and far into the Early Modern period, they came to function as contacts and representatives for these eastern trade interests. Gradually, they also acted as tax collectors on behalf of Novgorod and the later Moscow principality that replaced Novgorod at the end of the fifteenth century. Nevertheless, it seems that in terms of economics, the eastern Karelians held a sort of semi-autonomous position. They operated as independent economic actors with regard to trade and tribute collecting in the Sámi area. The fact that it was often Karelians who represented Russian trade and tax interests in practice vis-à-vis the Sámi in the west can be seen in the many place names with the prefix *Karel-*. Especially illustrative is a series of Norwegian-Sámi name pairs where the prefix in

¹⁸ Storå 1977; Bernštam 1978; cf. Eidlitz Kuoljok 1991, 82.

Norwegian is *Russe-* (meaning 'Russian'), while the Sámi name is compounded with *Gárjjel-* (for example, *Russvika/Gárjjelgoadi* in Tysfjord).

4.2.3 *Trade Interests and Local Elites from the Land around the Gulf of Bothnia: Kvens and Birkarls*

From the coastal landscape around the northernmost parts of the Gulf of Bothnia, local elites also conducted trade with the Sámi and demanded tribute-like payments from them. From the Early Middle Ages to the end of the thirteenth century, this activity was conducted by the Kvens, a group that clearly had specialized in the exchange of goods with the Sámi in the interior, but who also undertook harrying and plunder expeditions among them. The oldest written sources from the western area agree that Kvenland lay east both of the Norwegians' land and Finnmark, and, more precisely, was located on the coastal landscape around the northernmost portions of the Gulf of Bothnia. From the end of the twelfth century, Norwegian sources depict Kvenland as an area on a level with Finland and Karelia, and place it between Hälsingland and Finland. The localization of the Kvens' settlement areas around the uppermost and innermost portion of the Gulf of Bothnia seems to be confirmed through analysis of written medieval sources, older cartographic representations, administrative borders, and place names.¹⁹

The etymology behind the designation 'Kvens' and to whom the term referred has been vigorously debated among scholars. From the Finnish side, Kvenland was referred to as *Kainu* or *Kainuunmaa*, and the people as *kainulaiset*. This root seems to be the basis for corresponding designations in Russian such as *kajani* and *kaiano more* (i.e., 'the kajan sea', cf. Finnish *Kainuunmeri*) used for the innermost part of the Gulf of Bothnia. From a diachronic linguistic perspective, the Norwegian and the Finnish designations are too far from one another to represent any direct influence or borrowing one way or the other. The view most acceptable today, however, assumes that both have their origin in a Germanic word that was first borrowed into Finnish in its proto-Germanic form as *kainu*, meaning 'lowland field'. The same root is supposedly also found in the forms *hvein* in Old Norwegian and *hven/hvene* in Swedish and Danish dialects where it meant 'low lying, marshy area' or 'thin grass'/'area with thin grass'. According to this explanation, the people and the land along

¹⁹ Julku 1986.

the innermost and northernmost portions of the Gulf of Bothnia were supposedly given the name independently from two directions: respectively, by incoming Finnish peoples from Savonia, Tavastia, and Karelia and by Scandinavians on trading expeditions in the interior of northern Fennoscandia.²⁰

The ethnic status of the Kvens in the Middle Ages has also been greatly discussed. One factor indicating that the Kvens made up a separate ethnic group is that there seems to have been a certain continuity in the use of the *kven* concept from the Norwegian side: in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Norwegian sources use *kven* as a term for Finnish-speaking peoples in the inland river valleys who settled along the coast in North Troms and Finnmark. Some researchers, nevertheless, reject that the Kvens supposedly made up a separate ethnic group in medieval times and would rather relate the term to a special economic category. Based on a discussion of the origin of the corresponding Russian term *kajani*, Thomas Wallerström states that both this and the equivalent Finnish and Scandinavian terms point to a group of specialists ('Lappland travelers') who played a key role within an extensive economic system built around fur trade with the Sámi. *Kajani* and *kvener* are, thereby, interpreted as general terms tied to economic functions within this trading system, and as such could include elements from several different peoples.²¹

Their ethnic status notwithstanding, the written medieval sources prove that Kvens appears as a term for inhabitants in a particular area around the northern coastal landscape of the Gulf of Bothnia, an area that displayed certain territorial and topographic peculiarities compared to the surrounding landscape. These inhabitants seem to have practiced a special livelihood where hunting, outland subsistence, and trade with the Sámi and other neighboring peoples played a large role, while at the same time they practiced agriculture and animal husbandry.

Closely connected to the Kven question is the discussion of the origin, function, and rights of the Birkarls. It would lead us too far afield to repeat the extensive debate over the etymology of the term, and we will limit ourselves here to the contributions presented by some influential scholars.²² What can be established is that throughout the Late Middle Ages and the sixteenth century, the Birkarls appeared as merchants with

²⁰ Vahtola 1980.

²¹ Wallerström 1995, 314–316.

²² Steckzén 1964; Vahtola 1987; Wallerström 1995.

roots in the farming population of the Torne, Lule, and Pite river valleys' lower regions and who had specialized in trade with the Sámi. During this period, the Birkarls sought out both Sámi in the interior and Coastal Sámi to the west and north. Their demand was above all directed at expensive furs, but also dried fish. The first time the Birkarls' livelihoods and rights are directly mentioned in contemporary written sources is in the Tälje-stadgan decree from 1328. Through this agreement, the Swedish regency for the young Swedish-Norwegian King Magnus Eriksson sought to regulate the relationship between the Hälsingland inhabitants and the Birkarls in the northern part of that area. There it states:

Further it was agreed that no one shall hinder the forest and nomadic people who are called Lapps in the folk dialect, in their hunting, nor the earlier mentioned Birkarlaboa, who travel to the aforementioned Lapps, visit them and return from them with their property...²³

The agreement was later affirmed by Magnus Eriksson when he came of age in 1340, and again by his son Erik Magnusson in 1358. The wording in the latter text indicates that the rights and duties of the Birkarls had been specified by Magnus Eriksson in a decree that was later lost.²⁴ Judging from these agreements, the Birkarls' activities had been well incorporated early in the fourteenth century. Therefore, there does not seem to be any reason to assume they had come about as a consequence of royal privileges. However, Swedish royal power gave the Birkarls protection against competition and infringements and, in practice, a monopoly within the Swedish trade system.²⁵

The last time the Kvens are mentioned in the High Middle Ages is in one of the Icelandic annals from 1271. At the same time, the Birkarls are mentioned for the first time in 1328, with comparable economic functions. This could suggest continuity in the economic activity, even if the designation of the practitioners changed. In other words, it is possible that the Birkarls arose as a sort of 'redefined' Kvens, who continued the taxation of the Sámi that had been carried on for generations by sedentary inhabitants in the coastal landscape of the Gulf of Bothnia, and within

²³ Translated from the old Swedish text, rendered by Fellman, vol. III (1912) no. 232; cf. *Diplomatarium Suecanum*, vol. IV, no. 2676.

²⁴ Wallerström 1995, 245.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 249.

the framework of an 'outland' (*erämark*) economy as we have discussed earlier for Finland.²⁶

4.2.4 *Colonization Strategies*

Alongside the Karelian colonization to the east, Sámi areas were also subject to other colonization campaigns in the south and west during the High Middle Ages. As mentioned above, we can distinguish here between colonization that was primarily brought about by economic incentives, and colonization that was in the main driven by political motives and which therefore took on the character of a 'politically-controlled economy' to a greater degree. Yet once under way, a colonization of the first type might also obtain support from the governmental authorities.

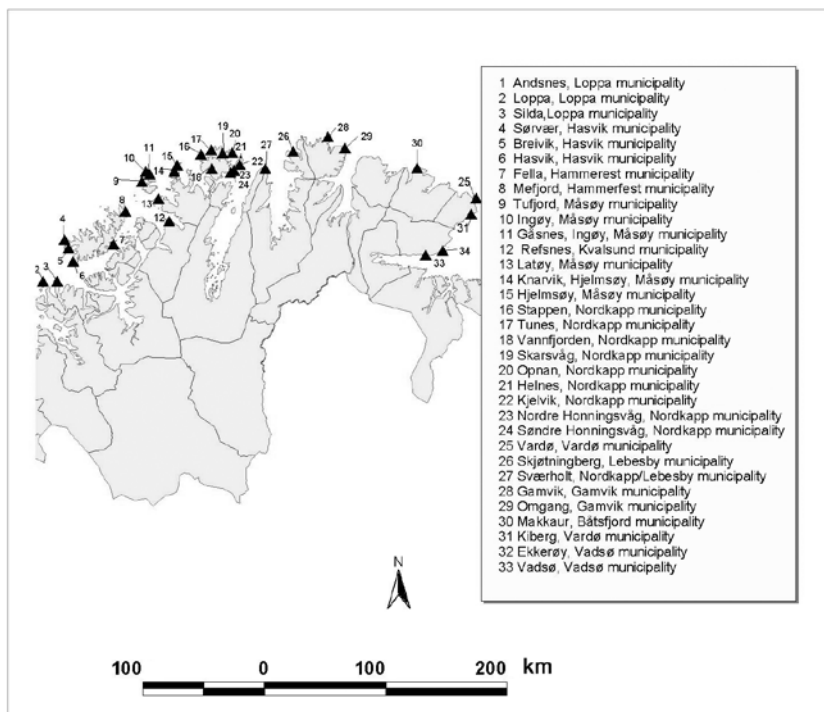
This can be illustrated by the Norwegian colonization of the outer coast of Finnmark that accelerated during the second half of the thirteenth century.²⁷ The condition for this expansion must above all be sought in the increased significance of commercial fishing in the High Middle Ages, especially as a result of the Hanseatic League's organized demand. Already toward the end of the twelfth century, one source indicates that both Norwegians and (non-Christian) Sámi were carrying on seasonal fishing (presumably spring fishing for cod) along the coast of West Finnmark.²⁸ Transport of dried fish from the north is mentioned in Norwegian sources from the end of the twelfth century, and in the last half of the thirteenth century the Hanseatic League acquired privileges that, in practice, gave them control of foreign trade. Through their organization, their widespread network in northern Europe, and not least their great access to capital, German merchants represented a stable demand for dried fish, and at the same time they could offer extensive and certain deliveries of grain products (mainly German rye flour). Economic structures were thereby established that came to have an effect on settlement and subsistence activities along the coast for centuries. Of particular importance was the establishment of The German Office in Bergen around 1360.

The breakthrough of the Norwegian fishing settlements along the coast of Finnmark implied that the old territorial border between 'Norwegian' and 'Sámi' land at Lyngen had been transgressed. This led to a sharpening of the conflicts of interest with Novgorod and the Karelians concerning trade

²⁶ Ibid., 358; see above chapter 3.

²⁷ Bratrein 1989, 201–217; 2001.

²⁸ Bratrein 1998.



▲ Skattsteder 1520.shp

Fig. 25. Fishing villages in Finnmark ca. 1520. (Map: Elin Rose Myrvoll, source: Norwegian Mapping Authority.)

with and tribute collection from the Sámi. Icelandic annals mention eleven Russian and Karelian incursions along the northern Norwegian coast during the period 1250–1444.²⁹ In the annals, the assaults are attributed alternately to Russians and Karelians. Russian sources which partly cover the same events show that the expeditions were often led by military officers from Novgorod or by Russian city leaders (*posadniki*) from the Dvina area.³⁰ However, attacks solely by Karelians also occurred. From the Norwegian side, these clashes were depicted as military and harrying raids, but it is reasonable to understand them as expressions of competing political and economic interests which involved governmental authorities. Several of the Russian/Karelian attacks were aimed directly at sites and strongholds that represented Norwegian governmental authority and Church organization in the north. Thus, they burned Bjarkøy, the estate of the State Council leader Erling Vidkunnsen, in 1320, and on another occasion the Lenvik parsonage. However, there were also Norwegian harrying raids in the White Sea (in 1419 and 1444) and these appear similarly to have aimed at the areas where Novgorod's power was strongest: the coastal strip between the mouth of the Dvina and Onega rivers. In this case, the traditional Norwegian conscription fleet was probably mobilized. In 1420, the inhabitants of Finnmark and Hålogaland complained that they had to "be in the navy" both summer and winter because of "the damage . . . that Russians and heathens caused and wanted to cause them."³¹ As early as the provisions of the Gulathing law about the size of the conscription fleet, it was ascertained that the ships from the northern part of Hålogaland had special duties of "keeping watch to the east," and at the beginning of the fourteenth century, the Norwegian king tried to require the Hålogalanders to build larger conscription ships.³²

Norwegian central authorities aimed at establishing institutions that could represent their power in the area, which manifested, for example, in the building of churches. While the church in Lenvik was considered to be "the northernmost in the world" at the end of the twelfth century (Rimbegla), another church was built at Tromsø in the middle of the thirteenth century that acquired the status of a royal chapel. About the same time, the Skansen fortification must have been established here.³³

²⁹ Storm 1888.

³⁰ Ušakov 1971, 28.

³¹ Johnsen 1923, 29.

³² Høgsæt, Sandmo, and Bertelsen 1994.

³³ Lind 2000b, 43.

This church building must be seen in connection with the Norwegian king, Haakon Haakonsson, having received a papal dispensation in 1241 from his earlier crusade pledge in return for fighting the heathen neighbors in his own kingdom.³⁴ In 1246, the king was permanently awarded the right to appoint clergymen in these churches that he or his heirs built in the newly Christianized areas. From the wording in the papal letter, which clearly reproduces King Haakon's petition, it is obvious that the king must have argued that the heathens must be subject to "Christian domination."³⁵ Another papal letter six years later states explicitly that the people who are called "sambitae" shall be subject to King Haakon if he Christianizes them. It is likely that this designation refers to the Sámi. In 1307, a church was also built at Vardø at the easternmost point of the Varanger peninsula in Finnmark. It was consecrated by the Norwegian archbishop during a visit to the north. Moreover, the fortification Vardøhus was built about the same time, during the rule of Haakon V. Magnusson (1299–1319). Both the efforts to get the Sámi to "take the faith" and the physical manifestations of power that churches and fortifications represented must clearly be seen in connection with the intensified political struggle for the Sámi resource areas in the north. Well into the Late Middle Ages, churches were built in a number of fishing villages along the Finnmark coast.³⁶ However, for a long time these churches would only have the status of chapels, without the independent right to tithe and without any permanent parish organization around them, which clearly shows that the area was still considered to be mission territory (*terra missionis*).

At the same time that the colonization of the Finnmark coast accelerated, Sámi areas in southern Troms and northern Nordland counties were subject to Norwegian expansion. From the middle of the thirteenth century, Norwegian farmers began to use fjord areas that earlier had been reserved for the Sámi.³⁷ This change may have been conditioned by the fact that after the defeat of the local chieftains—and the lack of interest in Sámi products by their royal superiors—there was no longer any political authority that could or would hinder Norwegian farmers from moving into the fjords to appropriate land for agricultural purposes. The expansion into the fjords and northward along the Finnmark coast may also be related to changes in previously held cognitive and religious conceptions

³⁴ *Diplomatarium Norvegicum*, vol. I, no. 24, 1847.

³⁵ Hamre 1977.

³⁶ Lind 2000b.

³⁷ Hansen 1990b; Andersen 1992, 2002.



Fig. 26. The deserted fishing village Tunes at Magerøya, Finnmark. The church ruin is located inside the cemetery to the left in the picture, while the traces of the fishing village are concentrated around the small sandy cove in the middle of the picture. (Photo: Bjørnar Olsen.)

of the landscape, which probably had been imperative especially for the Norwegian population's choice of residence.

A somewhat different colonization strategy consisted of implanting an agricultural population, which was dependent on an infrastructure that was established, maintained, and guaranteed by an external power for its subsistence activities. The archaeologist Thomas Wallerström sees the diversified colonization of the Pite river, Lule river, and Torne valleys during the fourteenth century in this perspective.³⁸ The earlier permanent settlement in all three river valleys had been characterized by agriculture as part of a general 'outland' livelihood with its origin and lines of communication southeastward, where contributions from various types of outland livelihoods, including hunting and trapping, played an important role. During the wave of colonization that occurred in the fourteenth century, however, this development took a different course.

³⁸ Wallerström 1995.

In Tornedalen, the outland (*erämark*) adaptation was continued by Finnish farmers coming from Övre Satakunta and Tavastia. The further colonization of the Pite river and the Lule river valleys, however, was carried out by the immigration of farmers from more southerly Swedish farming villages. Their economic organization made them completely dependent on Swedish authorities establishing and guaranteeing an infrastructure that could assure both a regular supply of goods from the outside and a steady sale of their surplus production.³⁹ This infrastructure included institutionalized market places, a monetary system, permanently organized trade with distant business centers, as well as permanently organized jurisdiction (with monopoly on the courts and legislation), and the monopoly on the use of force and state pretensions for the disposal of areas and resources for which there was no clear owner. Such a dependent agricultural population would thereby function as a lever for establishing state power structures in the area and integrating those structures into appropriate forms of government. It is also in this light that one has to consider the Swedish authorities' policy of donating extensive land areas in the north to private persons and religious institutions.

4.2.5 *Division of Sámi Land into Spheres of Interest*

Toward the end of the High Middle Ages, competition for dominion over Sámi land led state authorities into concluding mutual agreements that assured them certain joint, overlapping spheres of influence. In addition, the struggle for influence in northern Fennoscandia was also connected to a corresponding struggle for dominion over the land around the Baltic. From the late twelfth century, both Denmark and Sweden had entered upon a policy of conquering land toward the east, which was formally called 'crusades' and was blessed by the pope, but which actually was a matter of political and economic domination. While Denmark expanded on the south side of the Baltic, Sweden subjugated the Suomi Finns and Tavastlanders (*hämäläiset*) in present-day Finland. In this competition to convert the Baltic and Balto-Finnic peoples, the western, Catholic side portrayed the Greek Orthodox Russians as not much better than the heathens.⁴⁰ Late in the thirteenth century, it was the Karelians' turn to be subjugated, and at the beginning of the fourteenth century, Novgorod was at war with both Sweden and Norway who were united under a

³⁹ Ibid., 278.

⁴⁰ Lind 2001.

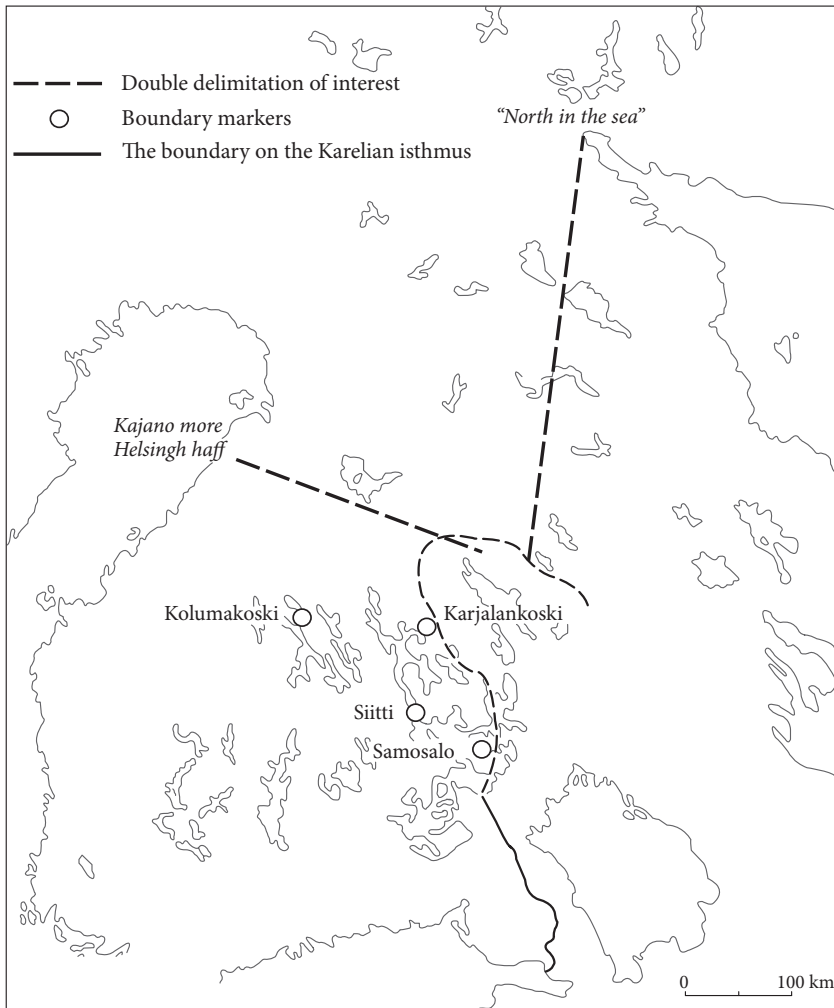


Fig. 27. The common Swedish-Russian taxation area on Nordkalotten according to the peace treaty of 1323 (from Edgren and Törnblom 1993).

common king. The fight for dominion over the Karelians was thereby connected to the rivalry in the north, with the mutual harrying expeditions by Karelians/Russians and Norwegians.

Through two peace agreements in the 1320s, however, the scope of taxation and spheres of interest were regulated. In 1323, a peace agreement between Novgorod and Sweden was made at the newly built Russian fortification Orekhovec (or Nöteborg) at the river outlet of the Ladoga. The border regulation that formed part of this Nöteborg peace accord is one of the most debated questions in the history of northern Fennoscandia. Preserved copies of the peace agreement—which exist in both Russian, Swedish, and Latin versions—contain hazy and seemingly diverging information about the definition of the border in the north. While all versions of the agreement contain very precise information about the southeastern border between the Swedish and Russian area, the information becomes very approximate and hazy about the north. Moreover, the various copies contain apparently contradictory information about where the border ends: the Russian document asserts that the border ends at “*kaiano more*” and the Latin has in a corresponding way “*helsingh haff*,” while the Swedish copy quite simply states “*nor i haffuit*,” best translated as ‘north in the sea’ (see fig. 27). The salient point has been whether the border followed a line northwestward through Finland to the northernmost portion of the Gulf of Bothnia, or whether it veered off northward and went straight to the innermost area of the White Sea, or even all the way to Varanger. The question had already been posed and discussed in this way from the middle of the sixteenth century, as well as by the Swedish King Karl IX, who sought to utilize the formulation *nord i havet* to justify a Swedish policy of expansion in the northern areas.

However, scholars Jarl Gallén and John Lind have put forth an alternative interpretation based on the presumption that the border formulations do not aim at one definite border. Instead, they propose that there were two borderlines which delimited an intermediate common Swedish-Russian sphere of interest and in which both parties would have the right to trade and taxation. The line in the south that goes toward the northwest and reaches into the Gulf of Bothnia thereby constituted a dividing line between purely Swedish areas in present day Finland and the common area, while the line that goes northward and out into the White Sea formed the border between the common area and the purely Russian areas to the east. The fact that the documents contain different and diverging texts is, according to Gallén and Lind, explained by a procedure of exchanging documents: each of the parties was supposed to

commit themselves with regard to the borderline that was most distant from them. Novgorod committed itself not to overstep the borderline to the purely Swedish area in Finland, and therefore had to leave behind in Swedish hands a Russian copy that described this line, while the Swedes for their part had to leave behind a Swedish language description of the eastern borderline of the Russians.⁴¹

One of the main strengths of Gallén and Lind's interpretation is that it views the Swedish-Russian border agreement in the same light as the corresponding Norwegian-Russian agreement concluded three years later, and that also seems to have confirmed a common taxation area with outer limits to the east and west respectively. It also simply makes good sense that the common Swedish-Russian area limited in this way seems to correspond with the spread of Sámi settlement in northern Finland at this point in time.⁴²

As far as the relationship between Norway and Novgorod is concerned, a peace agreement had already been concluded between the Grand Duke of Novgorod Aleksander Nevskij and Norwegian King Haakon Haakonsson.⁴³ Aleksander desired to clear away conflicts and build alliances with partners in the west, not least because of the Mongols who were pressing the Russian principalities from the east. According to a Norwegian saga, however, the agreement "was not held for a long time afterwards." We do not know the precise wording of the peace agreement, but it is possible that it formed the basis for a later, extant report dated ca. 1330 about border and taxation relations between Norway and Novgorod, which states:

These are the border marks between the realm of the Norwegian king and the Russian king, according to what old men have told and old settled men and Sámi still tell to this day: the Russians have the right to demand tax along the sea until Lyngstuva, and in the mountains until Maeleå, which is situated straight up from Lyngstuva and eastward, toward the Keel. But the king of Norway collects tax eastward until Trianaema and along Gandvik until Veleaga, any place where there are half-Karelians or half-Sámi who are born of a Sámi mother. And on the uttermost borders no more than five squirrel pelts (skins) may be collected from each bow, according to old custom, if they agree.⁴⁴

⁴¹ Gallén and Lind 1991.

⁴² Cf. T. Itkonen 1948.

⁴³ Soga om Haakon Haakonsson [The Saga of King Haakon Haakonsson], *Norrøne bokverk*, vol. 22, Oslo 1963, 279.

⁴⁴ Translated from the old Norwegian text, published in NgL, vol. III, 1849, 152–153.

According to this account, the common Norwegian-Russian taxation area stretched from the old territorial border for Sámi land at Lyngen all the way to the easternmost point on the Kola Peninsula, also known as Trines or Ponoj (Pyenne) (see fig. 24). Furthermore, the Norwegian right to taxation continued around and along the White Sea, more precisely to a river Veleaga, which can probably be identified as a branch of the Umba, called *Vieljoki* in Finnish. The peace agreement from 1326 in itself contains no information about the setting of the borders. The text of the agreement leaves it to the Norwegian king to divide the land “according to his conscience.”⁴⁵ Yet the aforementioned, undated description has been preserved as an attachment to the peace agreement, so it is possible that it was ratified at the same time.⁴⁶

Through the peace agreements of the 1320s, the majority of the Sámi settlement areas, both in the interior and along the Arctic coast, was either defined or affirmed as a common sphere of interest and taxation area for the surrounding states. The constitutional situation that then applied to the Sámi areas in principle remained in force for the next 300 to 400 years. The mutual understanding between the states created new conditions for both trade activity and permanent settlement. A principal point in the agreements was the free and unhindered access to the common areas for traders who operated within each of the states’ economic spheres. This is expressed most clearly in the Norwegian-Russian agreement, which says:

Likewise merchants from Norway shall be able to travel freely over to Novgorod and Zavolochye (Sauløke) without any form of hindrance, and in the same way merchants from Novgorod and Zavolochye conversely shall be able to travel unhindered to Norway.⁴⁷

On this point, the designation ‘Zavolochye’ was likely used for a wider geographic area than in the Early Middle Ages, when it referred mainly to inland areas around the tributaries to the Onega, Dvina, and Vaga rivers. In keeping with the denser settlement along the White Sea coast, the land around the mouth of the Dvina was also included and, from the fourteenth century, Kholmogory served as an administrative center

⁴⁵ NgL, vol. III, 1849, 151–152.

⁴⁶ An alternative interpretation states that they involved a double set of borders: both an unambiguous national border between the two state powers’ actual area of authority as referred to in the treaty from 1326, and a common, mutually overlapping area for taxation of and trade with the Sámi.

⁴⁷ Translated from the old Norwegian text, rendered in NgL, vol. III, 1849, 151–152.

in Zavolochye (see figs. 23 and 43).⁴⁸ At the same time, the ethnic composition of the population had changed and now included a much larger contingent of Russians and Karelians. From the eastern side, the proviso about free passage was first and foremost of significance in that it assured Russians and Karelian merchants free passage in the common areas.⁴⁹ Since free passage for trading partners from different sides was then legally asserted in a treaty, state powers had to take on new means in order to support 'their' merchants. Several scholars have pointed out that the special treatment the Birkarls gained from the Swedish crown must be seen in this perspective.⁵⁰ Thus, when the Swedish monarchy granted their protection to the Birkarls just a few years after the conclusion of the border agreements, this can be understood as a countermeasure to restrain the extensive activities of Novgorod and the Karelians in the interior of northern Fennoscandia. Through this effort, the Swedish monarchy managed to create closer ties to an economic elite that already existed on the coastal lands, at the same time as it indirectly took hold of the Sámi settlement areas in which the Birkarls were traveling. Thus, the local elite was redefined and tied to an alternative economic network, namely the Swedish-Hanseatic network with a hub in Stockholm.⁵¹

Over time, it seems that these measures were successful in the sense that the Birkarls took over a larger portion of the trade throughout the entire Sámi area and displaced the Karelians from some of their positions. While the Karelians dominated east-west trade in the inner part of northern Fennoscandia until the middle of the fifteenth century, the Birkarls seem to have taken over more and more of their functions in the west after this point in time. The earliest evidence that the Birkarls' journeys also reached over to the coastal landscape in the west comes from 1497–1498. Following a complaint that the Birkarls in Pite and Lule had been turned away on the Norwegian side, orders were issued that no one must hinder their traditional trade journeys to the Norwegian side and their taxation of the Sámi there.⁵² As far as the interior is concerned, it appears that the Birkarls may have taken over the trade and taxation that earlier were carried out by the Karelians on behalf of Novgorod. Thus, seemingly

⁴⁸ Eidlitz Kuoljok 1991, 74.

⁴⁹ That the peace agreement mentions Zavolochye in particular has also been explained by the need to ensure the cooperation of the White Sea inhabitants. See Eidlitz Kuoljok 1991, 117.

⁵⁰ Steckzén 1964; Wallerström 1995; Hansen 2011, 297, 305–307.

⁵¹ Wallerström 1995.

⁵² Steckzén 1964, 288.

Swedish taxation terms from the inner parts of northern Fennoscandia, such as *båge* (bue) and *rök* (fireplace) might be translated from the corresponding Russian terms *luk* and *dym*, like the counting unit *timmer* (40 pieces, used for furs like squirrel skins), which in turn could represent a loan translation of Russian *soroček*.⁵³

4.3 LIVELIHOOD, ECONOMY AND SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

There have been few detailed studies of the economy and social organization of the Sami in the Middle Ages and thus our knowledge of how they lived is rather rudimentary. Contrary to the records from later centuries, there are no extensive written sources from the Middle Ages that help us reconstruct settlement patterns, economy, or social organization in detail. The archaeological material, however, is quite abundant and helps us understand Sami subsistence patterns and social structures during the medieval period. For the last part of the Middle Ages, especially the fifteenth century, we can to some degree draw retrospectively on the more detailed records from the middle of the sixteenth century.

In general, the extant material suggests that hunting, trapping, and fishing constituted the primary livelihood for most Sámi. Nevertheless, that does not mean that other livelihoods were unfamiliar to them. As discussed in the previous chapter, the Sámi early became acquainted with other subsistence activities such as animal husbandry and agriculture. Along the coast in the north and west, it also seems that the Coastal Sámi adapted early to Hanseatic Bergen trade and other forms of trade, and they began to combine participation in commercial fisheries with traditional forms of hunting. In some areas, there are indications that adjustment to new trade systems led to a marked intensification of wild reindeer hunting,⁵⁴ while pastoral activities also seem to have gained a foothold in several areas.⁵⁵ In more general terms, contact with external trading partners made economic specialization possible by securing the supply of necessary goods in return for sought-after Sámi products.

In the Middle Ages, the Sámi's economic choices were therefore not only determined by their own subsistence needs and local resources. Familiarity with neighboring peoples' occupations and the possibilities

⁵³ Wallerström 1995, 261.

⁵⁴ Odner 2001.

⁵⁵ Andersen 2002; Hedman 2003.

for specialization and combined activities that various trading systems offered also facilitated new options and acted as stimuli for increased differentiation of the Sámi economy. Which subsistence strategies were actually chosen, however, was a result of complex processes influenced by social circumstances and cultural values as well. Existing norms for 'correct' behavior and internal power relations in the hunting society could thus play a decisive role for the outcome. For example, the ways in which tensions between individual ambitions and collective solidarity was managed could lead to very different economic and social consequences.⁵⁶

In the literature, there has been a marked tendency to tie the Sámi hunting economy to a special Sámi social type: the *siida* society. The point of departure has mostly been ethnographic depictions of the Skolt Sámi *siidas* from the latter part of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century. Finnish scholar Väinö Tanner's seminal work, *Skolttlapparna*, from 1929, has greatly influenced conceptions of Sámi social organization.⁵⁷ Tanner emphasized strong collective features of the Sámi social organization, in which collective institutions above the household level played a decisive role in resource management and the regulation of relationships between individual households. The principle of collective sharing of the hunting yield—with proportional distributions between the households depending on their size and needs—also seems to have been strong.⁵⁸ Since Tanner's work, some scholars have pointed out that the principle of sharing mainly applied to those forms of resource exploitation that required collective effort, such as wild reindeer hunting and salmon fishing in large rivers. With individual forms of hunting and trapping, the catch went to the individual hunter and his household. At the same time, questions have been raised about whether or to what extent the collective features that Tanner asserts for the Skolt Sámi *siidas* were reinforced or facilitated by the Russian administration of this area; in other words, whether they may simply have been encouraged by Russian administrative practice and legislation.⁵⁹

Newer research has also documented significant regional and chronological variation in the early Sámi communities. The idea that they were all subject to an original and uniform *siida* community type cannot be maintained today. This fact, however, does not preclude the possibility

⁵⁶ Olsen 1987.

⁵⁷ Tanner 1929; e.g. Solem 1933.

⁵⁸ Tanner 1929.

⁵⁹ Eidlitz Kuoljok 1987; Berg 2001.

that features of social organization were common among Sámi hunting societies, just as there were common features of farming societies and reindeer-herding societies. The sharing of hunting products and the existence of collective institutions above the household level are indeed documented for different parts of the Sámi area, and there is little reason to doubt that at least during certain historical periods these were widespread features among Sámi hunting communities.

However, to note common features is not saying that such institutions were the most 'original' or 'authentic.' They could in themselves be a result of choices made in given circumstances in a relatively recent period, and therefore cannot automatically be held valid for Sámi society in earlier times. As we saw in the preceding chapter, burial finds, among other things, indicate significant social differentiation within Sámi societies in the Viking Age and Early Middle Ages.⁶⁰ This was also the case in areas where Sámi societies during later periods are documented as being relatively 'egalitarian.' We have also seen how cultural expressions related to religious practice can be homogenized over large areas in periods with external pressure, while in other periods, we observe far greater local variation. Therefore, we must remain open to the possibility of considerable cultural and socio-economic flexibility when trying to understand Sámi social development in the past.

VÄINÖ TANNER'S ANALYSIS OF SKOLT SÁMI *SIIDA* SOCIETY

In 1929, the Finnish geologist and geographer Väinö Tanner (1881–1948) published the monograph, *Anthropo-geographic studies in the Petsamo area, I. The Skolt Lapps*. He had become very familiar with the area and the Skolt Sámi and other eastern Sámi groups through several field travels, first as a geologist in the years 1905–09 and later as a member of several reindeer-herding commissions as well as the Finnish-Norwegian border commission in 1922–24. The prevailing opinion in Finland at that time was that the Skolt Sámi were a 'degenerate' and 'depraved' people who succumbed to liquor trafficking and other vices. Tanner, on the contrary, had become convinced that this was a misconception and, as he writes in the book's preface, that "...the Skolts, in spite of their outer misery, absolutely did not make up a pariah class, and

⁶⁰ Zachrisson 1997; Schanche 2000.

without exception belonged to the most gifted by nature and in their moral state one of the best-developed population elements . . ." What is more, when one had learned to see through the "rather shallow alien patina" left by long cultural contacts with the Russians, a number of features were discernable that seemed to "... lead directly back to the real old Lapp societal culture." His voluminous book of 518 pages stands out as a cultural, historical, and sociological analysis of the Skolt Sámi's economy, ethnic genealogy, settlement, and social organization dating back to prehistoric times. By retrospectively combining transmitted traditions documented through extensive fieldwork with analysis of archive material and earlier literature, Tanner thought he had unveiled "original features" of the Skolt Sámi mode of living and social organization, which thus exhibited a high degree of continuity.

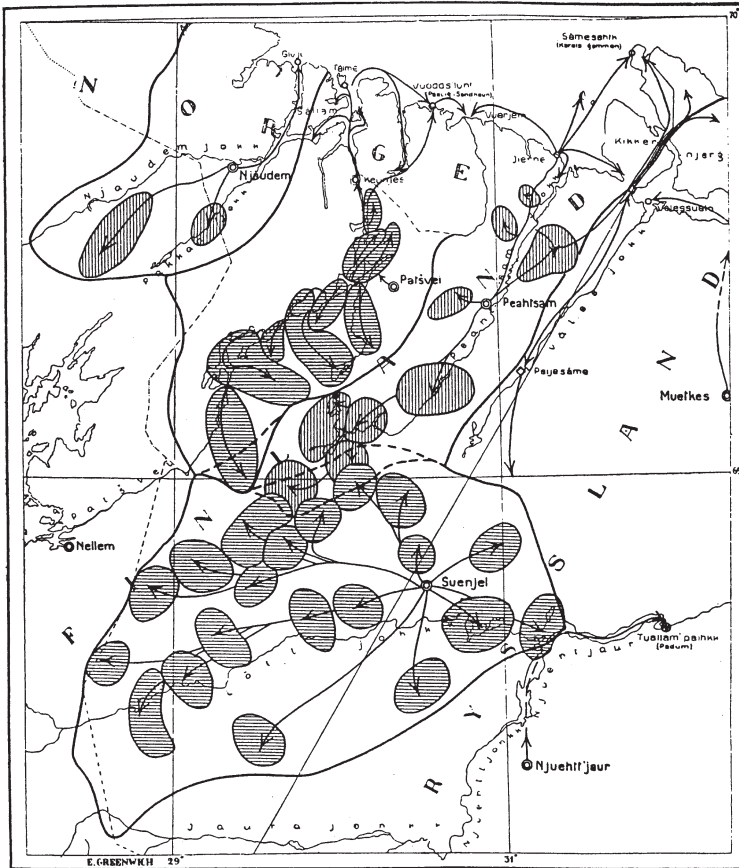


Fig. E. The East Sámi siida areas with individual family areas shaded (from Tanner 1929).

The picture of the Skolt Sámi societies that Tanner sketched displayed strong collective features, primarily concerning rights to dispose of certain resources and the *siida*'s internal, self-governing institutions. All resources within the *siida* area were, in principle, considered as belonging to the *siida* collective and thus all members of the *siida* had common access to them. Nevertheless, hunting areas and fishing waters were divided into smaller units used by individual families during spring, summer, and fall as part of the seasonal disintegration into family-based settlements. Common access to resources manifested as a general reciprocity principle for sharing the returns, which were distributed proportionally according to the number of grown men in the household. Nevertheless, this was the case primarily with wild reindeer hunting, that is, hunting methods that required a collective effort from the entire *siida*. With the chase hunt of reindeer on crusty snow in late winter, the prey was distributed proportionally between the participating hunters. Such collective forms of hunting were distinguished from the individual hunt, which seems to have taken place on household hunting grounds associated with autumn settlements, where the prey was then kept by the individual hunter. Common household utensils and individual hunting weapons were also owned privately.

This reciprocity principle also did not apply for salmon fishing done with drift nets at the large rapids and falls in the rivers, unless the fishing was leased out to outsiders, in which case the income went into the *siida*'s common fund. Regarding fishing with the special and limited salmon seines out in the fjords, a clear distribution between the households was nevertheless practiced, but in this case it was proportional to how many male members over one and a half years of age were in each household. The reason for this seems to have been that the number of such fishing spots was very limited. This distribution principle led, however, to some of the fishing spots being used in common by several households, while others could be used by a single household alone because of a large number of male children. In addition, the use of the salmon seines was rotated every year, so that all family units were able to have access to the different spots. In addition, fishing in the fjords was free and could be pursued by all *siida* members at their discretion.

With regard to pasture for domestic reindeer, the season was decisive. In the summer when the reindeer were free to move, the entire *siida* area was considered as one common pasture area, granting all *siida* members equal right to grazing regardless of the number of reindeer. After separation and gathering in the fall, the reindeer grazed on individual pastures in the autumn dwelling places.

In spite of variations and the fact that that no "uniform hunting regimen" could be uncovered, Tanner thought he could identify certain features of "primitive communism."^d Nor could the system for resource management be detached from social organization: the basic social unit was the individual household with the family father as head. At the father's death, the responsibility passed to the oldest son or another person, in some cases the widow, who was then head

^d Tanner 1929, 365.

of the household. Household organization was clearly patriarchal, even though kinship as such was conceived bilaterally. All heads of household had a seat in a common assembly for the whole *siida*, called the *norraz*. It was the *norraz* that had the authority to make binding decisions about resource use. Thus, it could adjust and redistribute the use of individual family areas if changes in the household's relative size required such a change. The *norraz* also decided questions of accepting outsiders into the *siida*, for example through intermarriage or moving. In addition, it made decisions that concerned the *siida* as a whole, in relation to other *siidas* or the respective state authorities. The *norraz* controlled social life in the *siida* and also resolved disputes, for example in connection to reindeer theft. Tanner stresses that the *norraz* was considered as the bearer and mediator of the generations' collected experiences and wisdom. As a governing institution, the *norraz* had an "almost conservative, republican character".^e Later research has also stressed the role that the *norraz* played in taking care of the trapping society's traditional knowledge and the authority of the elders.

TANNER'S AGENDA

Tanner's work was cast in a definite political context, a condition which has often been disregarded and has remained unquestioned by the many researchers who have later pointed to his work as a classic. At the time, the Petsamo area (*Beahccám-sijda*) had just fallen to Finland as a result of the border shift after the Dorpat peace accords in 1920. Interest in the newly-acquired area was great, and Petsamo was considered as a promising land with easily accessible and productive natural resources such as minerals, water power, and forests, as well as oil and gas. At the same time, the area became a favored research area for Finnish social and cultural scholars and for tourism.

Tanner, who was the greatest specialist in the area's geology, himself laid the scientific foundation for the discovery of large nickel deposits. He was urged to leave a position he had held in the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs in order to lead the geological investigations. His study of the Skolt Sámi was also initiated from political quarters and was primarily destined for the state administration and the general public. In the preface to his study, Tanner hoped that it would benefit not just the administration, but also "special researchers." He had no prior experience with humanistic or social scientific investigations, but from the preface it is evident that he sought to attach himself to the *Anthropogeographie* of the German geographer Friedrich Ratzel and the more sociologically-inspired 'human geography' of the French geographer Vidal de la Blache. His experiences with Sámi society stemmed primarily from his fieldwork in connection with the reindeer-herding commissions. Tanner's work, therefore, was part of a series of 'expert' works from the beginning of the twentieth century, in which cultural knowledge was produced with the practical goal of serving as a basis for decisions by state authorities.

^e Ibid., 346.

Much of Tanner's work indicates that he perceived the Skolt Sámi's earlier social forms as an expression of something 'authentic' and as a counterpart to what he saw as tendencies of decay in the modern society. In this way, his account stands out not only as a critique of the official policy toward the Sámi, but also as a deeper cultural criticism of modernity as such. He considered the Skolt Sámi culture that he believed he had reconstructed as unique and valuable, and he spoke out against Finnish agricultural colonization and industrial policy aiming at extracting raw materials. He not only stressed the long historical continuity of the *siida* organization, but also emphasized its suitability and rationality in relation to the Skolt Sámi's close interaction with natural conditions: "The *siida* assured man's natural rights through the maintenance of order and justice and could in this way, going back many centuries, produce a happy society in a God-forsaken wilderness."^f He made this claim in spite of the fact that he knew that the Skolt Sámi's mode of living had changed drastically during the previous couple of generations. From the 1870s, the barter economy and trade in kind had begun to give way to a money economy, initiated by increasing involvement with Norwegian and Russian trade. The Skolt Sámi had begun to participate in spring fishing in North Varanger and performed other kinds of paid work for Norwegians. Reindeer herding produced less profit, and the mountain and Coastal Sámi began to encroach upon the Skolt Sámi areas in South Varanger. In salmon fishing, the Skolt Sámi had competition from Norwegian wedge seining. The earlier borders between the *siidas* had been dislocated more than a hundred years before, and the annual migration pattern Tanner sketched had not been followed for several decades. In particular, the Báhceveaj- (Pasvik-) *siida*, which had had its territory divided by the drawing of the Russian-Norwegian border in 1826, experienced a crisis. In the border stipulation, the Báhceveaj Sámi lost their right to sea fishing on the Norwegian coast and the right to reindeer pasture on the Norwegian side. The portrait of a well-balanced social life in relation to nature that Tanner had sketched was thus in sharp contrast to the Skolt Sámi's actual situation at the time he did his fieldwork and made his observations.

EFFECTIVE HISTORY

Tanner's work came to have fundamental significance for later research and knowledge about Sámi conditions. Not only are later conceptions of the Skolt Sámi themselves largely based on his master narrative, his depiction of their social organization, resource utilization, and settlement patterns has been immensely influential on historical, archaeological, and sociological research concerning Sámi social conditions. The model society he depicted has, to a

^f Ibid., 386.

large degree, served as an ethnographic analogy for a number of interpretations of prehistoric and early historical materials. By serving as a standard reference work of a Sámi social type that seemingly had managed to withstand changes for centuries and had maintained features of an original hunting society, Tanner's portrayal threatened to become a generalized universal model of early Sámi social organization. Two factors seem to have been particularly important in Tanner's work becoming the dominant model: first, the lack of equally comprehensive and thorough investigations in other Sámi areas, and second, the fact that well into the postwar period, knowledge about Sámi communities were more like reports with limited potential for independent, research-based investigations of the primary material from the actual areas. Tanner's model was thus well on its way to being interpreted as an ideal type. In part, it was accorded great transfer value without always explaining the local conditions for possible analogical inferences, and in part it was used as a contrasting frame of reference for alternative presentations of past Sámi social conditions.

Later research has stressed that Skolt Sámi communities did not remain unaffected by the same geopolitical, economic, and religious influences that were given great importance in explaining the transformation processes in Sámi communities further west, such as governmental integration and administration, taxation, trade, and missionary activity. Rather than stressing the Skolt Sámi community organization as being particularly well-adapted and rational for a hunting society's needs, questions have been asked about what role the Skolt Sámi's special cultural contacts might have played in generating and maintaining their institutions. In this research, it has been emphasized that both Russian government administration and the Russian Orthodox Church had a more positive attitude to the Skolt Sámi's own social and cultural institutions than other government administrations and missionary campaigns. The Russian Orthodox Church may have even reinforced the institutional power of the *norraz*, since it was interested in the elders' authority being maintained. In contrast to the Protestant Church that gained ground further west, the Russian Orthodox Church also offered a rich repertoire of symbols and rituals which may have been used by the Skolt Sámi for further cultural reproduction. It has also been pointed out that the special rules for resource administration may have been influenced by Russian administration and taxation. The distribution of salmon-fishing spots according to the number of male household members over one and a half years of age could thus be connected to the fact that the Russian tax was being assessed exactly according to the number of male *siida* members above this age, and that the income from salmon fishing was important for acquiring the cash necessary for the tax payment.

The geographical centrality of the Skolt Sámi settlement area may also have been significant. Placed at the intersection between several different trade systems and being subject to the interests of several states, they may have been able to negotiate this situation for their own benefit. The fact that the Skolt Sámi economy was so complex, and not unilaterally dependent on certain resources or a limited number of partners, may have given them special

possibilities to maintain a certain autonomy and stability. In 1906, Amund Helland stressed that, “The Skolts’ mode of living forms a peculiar intermediary between the fisherman, the hunter, the nomad, and the permanently settled population.”⁸

Even though Tanner consciously emphasized those aspects of Skolt Sámi resource utilization and social life that seemed to point back toward an ‘original’ social order, there is hardly any doubt that he called attention to important features that, with greater or lesser variations, have also characterized other earlier Sámi social forms in northern Fennoscandia. Through analysis of archaeological materials, written sources, and recorded oral traditions from such widespread parts of the Sámi settlement area as the Kola Peninsula, northern Finland, and the south and western Sámi territories on the Swedish and Norwegian side, later research has established features that point to corresponding ways of organizing the utilization of resources and social life. However, the way access to resources was actually regulated and institutionalized may well have varied, as did the actual constituents and composition of the social order.

Sources: Berg 2001; Eidlitz Kuoljok 1987; Massa 1984; Niemi 1994; Olsen 1987; Tanner 1929.

4.3.1 *Features of the Coastal Sámi Economy: Mass Hunting of Wild Reindeer in Varanger*

Throughout the High and Late Middle Ages the Sámi living along the coast of northern Norway became closely connected to the Bergen trade and increasingly utilized the fish resources in the fjords and in the nearby seas. At what point in time and to what degree they specialized in fishing, however, seems to vary. The trade campaigns of the Karelians and gradually of the Birkarls were also significant for the Coastal Sámi economy. Fishing and catching of mammals were combined to a varying extent with other subsistence activities such as wild reindeer hunting, small game hunting for furs, animal husbandry, and possibly in Nordland county, modest agriculture. Seen in a larger perspective from East Finnmark and southward to southern Nordland and Trøndelag, the Coastal Sámi’s forms of livelihood displayed considerable variation.

In East Finnmark, hunting wild reindeer came to play an important role for the Coastal Sámi. This was particularly the case in Varanger. On the isthmus between the Tana river and Varanger, extensive pit-fall systems have been found, with almost 2,700 pitfalls divided into

⁸ Helland 1906, 159.

fourteen systems.⁶¹ The structures essentially form three strategic main lines that effectively block the reindeer's migration to and from the Varanger peninsula. Also on the Varanger peninsula itself, there are several places in the valleys and other suitable places where pitfall systems have been registered, such that today over 3,300 pitfalls divided into twenty-five large systems have been recorded in this area. The pitfall systems were built in connection with natural hindrances such as watercourses, boggy areas, and ridges, that helped direct the reindeer towards the pits. The largest single system with 550 pitfalls is located at Gollevárri on the isthmus between Tana and Varanger (fig. 29).⁶² At the same time, wild reindeer were hunted using fences built of stone in the interior of the Varanger peninsula (fig. 28). Such structures (Sámi: *vuopmanat*) consisted of converging stone fences of up to 1100–1200 meters in length which often led into a circle-shaped enclosure where the reindeer would be captured. In addition, great numbers of stone built hides (shooting shelters), cairns, and caches have been identified there, which all contribute to the impression of very extensive hunting activity.

Pitfalls have been used for a long time in Fennoscandia, and their use undoubtedly goes back to the Stone Age. Much data suggests, however, that the extensive and varied hunting systems on the Varanger peninsula and in the interior of Varanger have a much more recent date. At Vuopmangieddi near Gollevárri, there is hunting site with the remains of sixteen turf houses that were clearly attached to the hunting systems nearby (fig. 29). Excavations undertaken in the houses and the refuse heaps have shown enormous quantities of bones and, in particular, reindeer antlers.⁶³ There are four ¹⁴C datings from the site: three are within the time frame AD 1225–1425, while the fourth was later than AD 1520.⁶⁴ Written evidence, such as county accounts, mention the hunting systems on the Varanger isthmus at the end of the sixteenth and beginning of the seventeenth centuries, because the Sámi had to pay a fee to the county governor at Vardøhus for hunting. The hunting systems were thus still in use at that time, but they seem to have decreased after AD 1600. By the middle of the seventeenth century, their use had almost entirely ceased, and in the 1690s it was reported that the systems “stand idle.”⁶⁵ There is reason

⁶¹ Vorren 1998, 19.

⁶² Vorren and Manker 1953; Vorren 1998.

⁶³ Munch and Munch 1998.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 129–131.

⁶⁵ Hansen 1985, 138; Niemi 1983, 182–183.

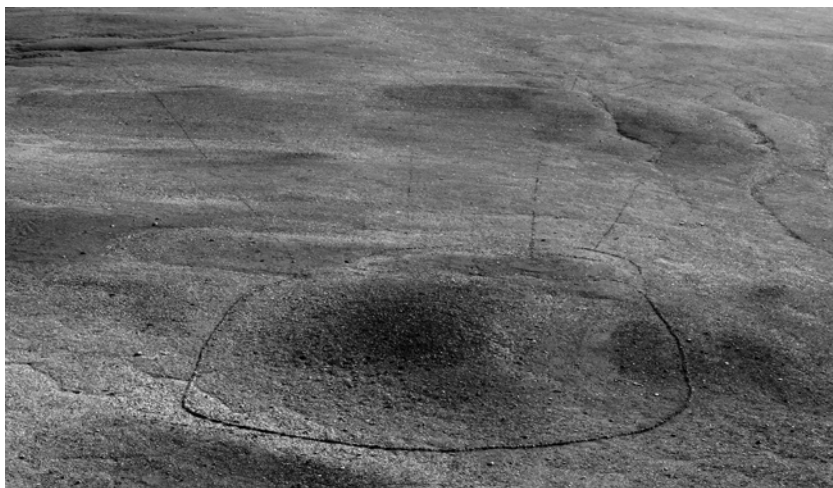


Fig. 28. Trapping system with converging stone fences (vuopman) on the Varanger Peninsula, Finnmark. The system lies on Noaidečearru (Kjøpmannskjølen) between Sandfjorddalen/Komagdalen and Syltefjord (Photo: Várjjat Sámi Musea/ Amund H. Steinbakken).

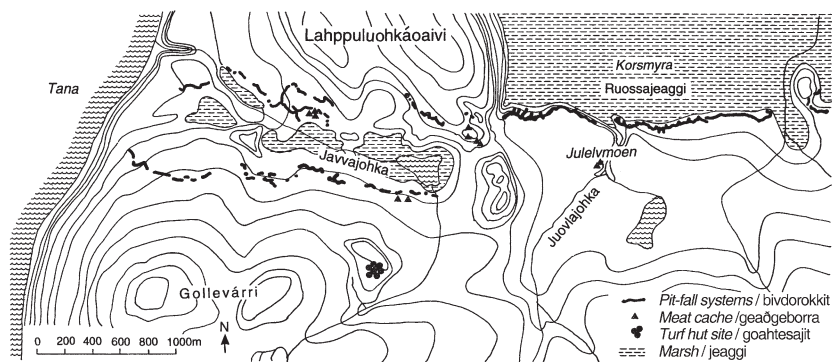


Fig. 29. Distribution of pitfall systems, meat caches and turf hut sites at Gollevárri on the isthmus between the Tana river valley and Varangerbotn, Finnmark. (Sketch by Frøydis Strand after Vorren and Manker 1953).

to assume that the systems were operating throughout large portions of the Middle Ages, but that the most intensive hunting took place in the latter half of that period.

It appears that such hunting was undertaken in the autumn by groups who lived on the coast the rest of the year. It is, therefore, interesting to see this material in connection with the investigations Knut Odner has undertaken of Sámi dwelling sites on the southeast side of the Selešnjárga peninsula in the inner part of the Varanger fjord.⁶⁶ These studies have great significance, not least because they shed light on economic changes among the Varanger Sámi in the Late Middle Ages. Together with the analysis of the hunting systems and the site at Gollevárri, they provide a solid basis for explaining some of the ways in which these changes were related to external systems of trade and taxation. Of special interest is the excavation of a circular house foundation at Geahčevájnjárga. Based on a coin found in the house, it can be dated to the first half of the fifteenth century. The fauna material was quite rich and also included a small number of sheep bones (possibly also goat). However, bones from sheep/goats represent less than one percent of the bone material. Goat and sheep keeping, therefore, cannot have contributed appreciably to the meat supply, and it is more reasonable to suppose that sheep and goats were kept for wool and milk.⁶⁷ Nearby, at Njárgageahči, a small number of cattle bones were found in a similar house foundation.⁶⁸ The ¹⁴C dating of the bones (ca. 1450–1600 AD) is somewhat later than the site at Geahčevájnjárga and suggest that cattle were introduced later in the area than sheep and goats.⁶⁹ Even though domestic animal species occur among the Coastal Sámi in Varanger at the end of the Middle Ages, their economic significance seems to have been modest.

The most interesting thing about the bone material from the site at Geahčevájnjárga is, however, the large predominance of reindeer. In spite of the fact that the site lies on the coast and is much better suited for fishing and catching sea mammals than for reindeer hunting, the share of bones from species like seal, whale, and fish is strikingly low. This apparent paradox becomes more understandable if we see this site in connection with the material from Gollevárri. The site at Geahčevájnjárga is dated from the beginning of the fifteenth century, a point in time when

⁶⁶ Odner 1992, 2001, see also Hedman and Olsen 2009.

⁶⁷ Hambleton and Rowley-Conwy 1997; Odner 2001.

⁶⁸ Odner 1992, 164.

⁶⁹ Odner 2001, 29.

hunting at Gollevárri was at its most intensive. A closer look at the reindeer bones from Geahčevájnjárga reveals that they belonged mainly to the meatiest parts of the reindeer (together with bones with a lot of marrow), while very few reindeer antlers were found. This composition of body parts suggests that the reindeer were slaughtered elsewhere, and that only parts of the carcass were brought to the dwelling places at the fjord.⁷⁰ At Vuopmangieddi near Gollevárri, the situation is entirely different; here, there is a very large percentage of reindeer antlers and skulls in the large refuse heaps. In a trench dug through the refuse heap in front of one of the turf houses, fifty-three skulls with antlers attached were found, and another twenty-seven were found inside the floor area.⁷¹ Comparable finds were made in three other excavated houses. Concerning the large refuse area on the slope below the house sites, the excavators write:

Over the entire area you could see antlers sticking up through the turf... It turned out that down the entire slope lay enormous quantities of reindeer antlers. Very few bones were found here... What dominated was the lower, coarse part of the antler, with rose garland, together with the skull itself.⁷²

Taken together, this means that the reindeer were slaughtered at dwelling places near the hunting systems, like at Gollevárri. The many unfinished pieces of bone spoons found here suggests that the antlers were pre-worked for further processing elsewhere. There are also finds that suggest extensive hide processing. Later in the year when the snow cover had come, meat and hides were brought down to the dwelling places on the fjord. Until that time, hides and meat could have been stored in the many meat caches built from stone found at Gollevárri.⁷³

The material from Geahčevájnjárga and Gollevárri is indicative of how the fur trade and increased taxation affected the Sámi economy in the area. Intensive hunting with very extensive and demanding technology can hardly be considered to be motivated by local needs alone. It was probably primarily furs that were in demand in external systems. However, at the same time, hunting provided a large excess of meat and other products that were primarily used locally, which probably altered the subsistence pattern for a period of time. Accordingly, Knut Odner maintains that the

⁷⁰ Hambleton and Rowley-Conwy 1997.

⁷¹ Munch and Munch 1998, 118.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 123–124.

⁷³ Odner 2001.



Fig. 30. Deposit of reindeer antlers at the dwelling site at Gollevárri. (Photo: Lars Ivar Hansen).

predominance of reindeer bones in the material from Geahčevájnjárga is an expression of how the local population made use of the excess meat that the fur trade indirectly produced. That they nevertheless chose to live at the coast during the winter probably reflects both tradition in the choice of dwelling place and the well-proven knowledge that maritime resources provided reliable supplies if the reindeer hunt failed.⁷⁴ The predominance of reindeer bones in the material from this particular site does not mean that the Varanger Sámi's economy more generally was based on wild reindeer hunting. Geahčevájnjárga functioned as a winter dwelling place that was probably occupied from October to May.⁷⁵ In the spring and summer, they could have fished for cod and pollack (coalfish) and trapped birds and sea mammals from sites further out in the fjord, as we know they did later.

The site at Geahčevájnjárga is dated from the find of a coin stamped in the Hanseatic city Reval (Tallinn) in Livonia during the period 1400–1420. The fact that it found its way to the Varanger fjord testifies to the Hanseatic League's control over the northern European economy in the Late Middle Ages. The question of which route it took to Varanger and who the intermediaries were, however, opens up several possible answers. The coin could have come here through the Hanseatic merchants' activity along the Norwegian coast. At the same time, the Hanseatic merchants also had quarters in Novgorod,⁷⁶ and the find of a Baltic coin at a site in Geahčevájnjárga could also be a result of this Eastern trade empire's activity in the north.⁷⁷

4.3.2 *Siida Organization, Settlement, and Economy: Varanger and Kvaenangen*

To what extent these processes of change were implemented by the *siida* collective, or whether individuals and individual families constituted the prime movers, remains open for debate. Within scholarly research, there has been some debate about the extent to which the *siida* made up a corporate entity in which families and individuals were subject to collective decision-making, or whether the *siida* was a loose union of relatively autonomous families.⁷⁸ Knut Odner has been perhaps the strongest

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Odner 1992, 171.

⁷⁶ Rybina 1992, 196–203.

⁷⁷ Odner 2001, 40–41.

⁷⁸ Tanner 1929; Solem 1933; Tegengren 1952; Olsen 1987; Hansen 1990a; Odner 1992; Mulk 1994, 2005; Andersen 2002.

proponent of the 'anti-collective' view of the Sámi *siida*.⁷⁹ His assessment of the households' autonomy and individual benefit maximization, however, seems to have little support in the archaeological material that he and others have examined.⁸⁰ These studies show that communal dwelling places were predominant throughout the Middle Ages, at both Selešnjárga, Vieranjárga, and other places along the Varanger fjord. The houses were generally of the same size and often arranged in rows or in clusters that might represent social values related to common interests and equality. Household autonomy, in the form of single house sites, seems to belong to the period after the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

In his later work, Odner also tones down the individualistic aspect of Sámi social organization.⁸¹ He claims, however, that the incorporation of the Varanger Sámi's production into external trade systems led to conflicts between individual ambitions and solidarity with the *siida* as a whole. He sees this conflict in context with what he conceives of as ritual depots at ancient dwelling places. The huge pit houses at the large Early Metal Age settlement at Mortensnes, somewhat further out in the fjord, also contain finds from the Middle Ages, such as a carefully made knife from the Baltic area.⁸² Odner interprets these finds as sacrificial deposits aimed at the ancestors, but which also had a contemporary social function: by taking imported status objects out of circulation, the Sámi were trying to prevent the potentially destructive social effects caused by individual accumulation. The collective rituals performed at ancient dwelling places at the same time underscore internal solidarity and connection with ancestors.⁸³ As we saw in the previous chapter, Mulk advanced a similar argument of how imported metal jewelry was deposited at the Sámi sacrificial sites from the Viking Age and Middle Ages in northern Sweden.⁸⁴

However, Odner does not directly answer the question about the organization of wild reindeer hunting and its possible social consequences. In our opinion, the large-scale hunting on the Varanger isthmus in the latter half of the Middle Ages could hardly be carried out without the organizational basis and the work cooperation that the *siida* constituted. It is also possible that such hunting was organized through cooperation

⁷⁹ Odner 1992.

⁸⁰ See Odner 1992, 71–73, 85; Odner 2001; Olsen 1984; Schanche 1988.

⁸¹ Odner 2001.

⁸² Johansen and Odner 1968.

⁸³ Odner 2001, 42–44.

⁸⁴ Mulk 1995.

among people from several *siidas*. At the same time, it seems rather unlikely that the complex technological and organizational infrastructure that this kind of reindeer hunting required was compatible with the presumed egalitarian social structure of the *siida*.⁸⁵ The organization of the actual hunt, the processing and distribution of the hunting products, the building and maintenance of the structures and more, probably required a decision-making structure with a relatively clearly-defined stratum of leaders. This organizational elite could also have had an enterprising influence on the technological and economic process of change (see below). To put it another way: there could have been forces internal to the Sámi societies that saw this development as favorable for the realization of their own social and economic ambitions.⁸⁶ In that case, the intensification of reindeer hunting may well have strengthened already existing tendencies towards social differentiation expressed in the rich grave goods from Varanger in the Viking period and the Early Middle Ages.⁸⁷

Notwithstanding the fact that the High and Late Middle Ages most likely brought important social and economic changes to the Coastal Sámi in Varanger, the settlement pattern and the organization of the dwelling places nevertheless suggests continuing *siida* organization. By this, we mean a local Sámi community that functioned as a territorial, economic and social entity, but without imposing any definite criteria for how this entity was organized. We can discern a somewhat similar pattern among the Coastal Sámi further west in Kvaenangen, northern Troms county, in the Late Middle Ages. Here too, there are indications of an effective *siida* organization throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, in spite of a highly complex economy that attached great importance to fishing, as well as elements of goat and sheep husbandry and small game hunting. A systematic survey of round turf houses from this time period shows that the distribution of these houses in Kvaenangen coincides with concentrations of scree graves.⁸⁸ Other features in the sixteenth-century tax rolls suggest the existence of three distinct social entities in the fjord, centered around Spildra, Straumen, and Burfjord. Later in the eighteenth century, this *siida*-based structure ceases. Communal dwelling places with round turf houses were then replaced by sites with single turf houses of rectangular form (called 'common houses') that lie more evenly distributed around the

⁸⁵ Solem 1933.

⁸⁶ Olsen 1984, 231–236; 1987.

⁸⁷ Schanche 2000.

⁸⁸ Grydeland 1996.

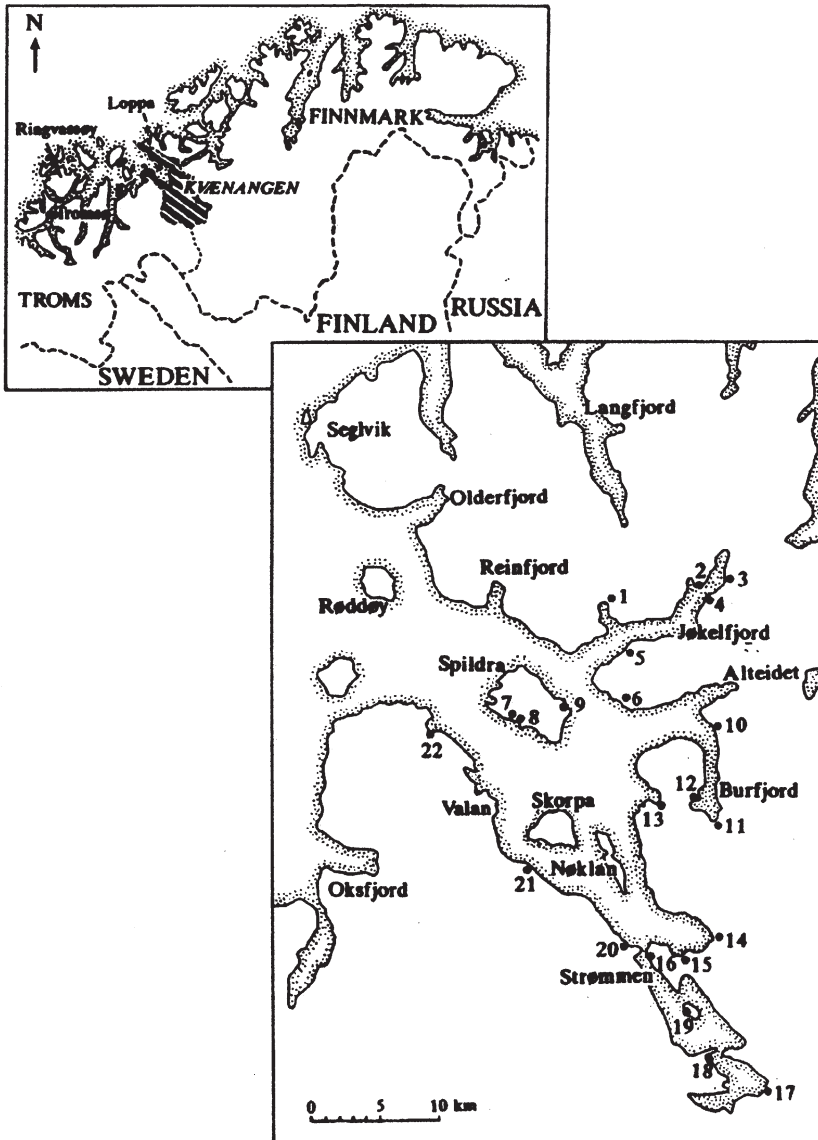


Fig. 31. Sámi settlements and cultural sites in Kvaenangen (from Grydeland 2001).

fjord, corresponding to the later farm settlement.⁸⁹ This marked change is due to a series of factors such as the increased importance of agriculture, Christianization, Norwegian immigration, and changes in property relationships, and that the Sámi themselves saw the benefits of an individual household-based economy.

In Kvaenangen, sheep/goat and cattle husbandry could have been introduced somewhat earlier than among the Coastal Sámi in Varanger. The economic significance of domestic animal husbandry might also have been larger. Finds from an excavated turf house at Vapsgedden, Spildra, dated between 1450 and 1650, give the impression of a highly complex economy: bones of sheep, goats, cattle, seal, porpoise, reindeer, and moose have been detected.⁹⁰ Nevertheless, bones of sheep, goats, or cattle are not, in themselves, evidence that the Sámi raised domestic animals. A slaughtered sheep could, for example, have been received in exchange for game and accordingly been part of the trade transactions that occurred between Sámi and Norwegians locally. In addition, it is striking that many of the early bone finds of sheep and goats from Spildra seem to indicate ritual contexts. The earliest find of domestic animals, from Noidegedden (Noaidegieddi) is dated between AD 900 and 1200. Here, burnt bone fragments from a whole sheep were found in a small, oval stone setting with bones of puffins and a possible porpoise or seal bone. The stone setting is one of six small cairns organized in a row. According to Schanche, the find must be associated with religious activity and should probably be understood as a fire sacrifice.⁹¹ In the above-mentioned house at Vapsgedden, the bones of an entire lamb were found buried inside the dwelling near the entrance (see fig. 32). A likely interpretation is that the lamb was a sacrifice, possibly to the goddess Uksáhká who, according to tradition, stayed by the door and was the one who protected children after they were born. Such sacrifices in turf houses are well-documented in older written sources on the Sámi,⁹² but this is the first time one has been archaeologically documented.⁹³

Without pushing the interpretation too far, it seems as if the introduction of domestic animals such as sheep and goats among the Coastal Sámi was

⁸⁹ Ibid., 52–59.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 83.

⁹¹ Schanche 2000, 150, 330.

⁹² Mebius 1968.

⁹³ Grydland 1996.

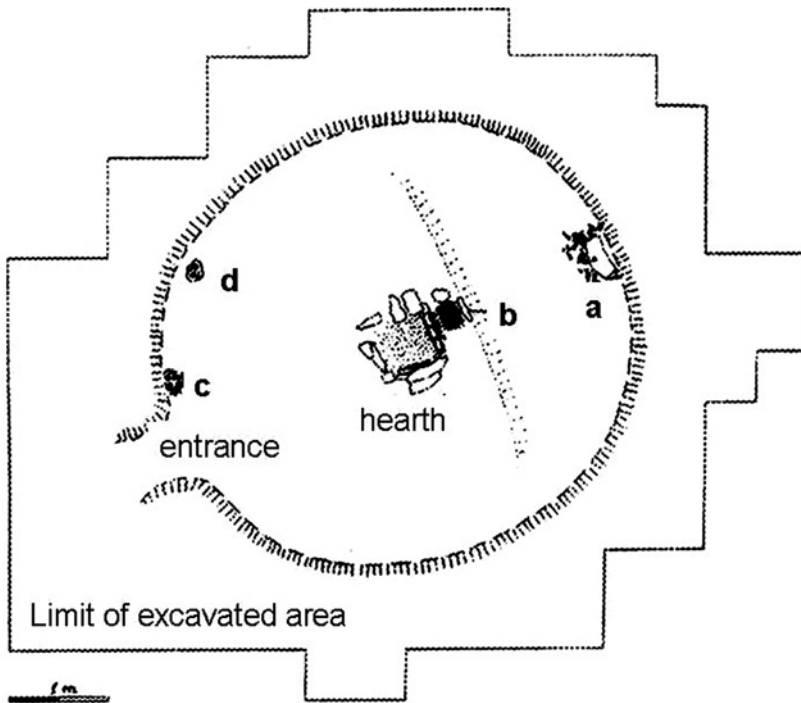


Fig. 32. Bone assemblage recovered during the excavation of a turf hut site at Vapsgedden, Spildra, Kvaenangen. The bones come from a lamb that was sacrificed right inside the door of the turf hut. (After Grydeland 2001.)

not simply motivated by economic or subsistence considerations. The fact that these animals had long been connected with the Norwegian way of life could have granted them special symbolic significance. In addition to its own internal cosmological meaning, sacrifices of such animals could also have communicated something about the relationship between ethnic groups. In a strained situation, the incorporation of animals associated with Norwegian culture could have been a way of symbolically negotiating inter-ethnic relations. These sacrifices can also be seen as an attempt use rituals to gain access to or get control over the powerful forces that the approaching Norwegians seemed to possess. That the animals, dead or alive, could have come to the Sámi as products of social or economic transactions with the Norwegians would have made them particularly suitable as symbolic objects.

4.3.3 *Sámi Fisher-Farmers*

In areas further south, it appears that Sámi coastal communities more truly adopted new livelihoods during the Middle Ages. Based on material from the Helgøy/Karlsøy area, northern Troms, Bratrein suggests that during the fifteenth century, the Sámi here replaced their hunting and fishing mode of living and its associated use of seasonal dwelling places with a purer, 'fisher-farmer' livelihood and more sedentary settlements.⁹⁴ Overall, the settlement pattern in the region shows a clear ethnic division, in which Sámi settlements associated with round turf houses were located along the small fjords of Ringvassøya, Reinøya, and the mainland, while the permanent Norwegian settlement was concentrated on the islands at the outer coast. With a few variations, this ethnic distribution of settlement sites dates back to the High Middle Ages, possibly to the twelfth or thirteenth century.⁹⁵ However, place names and local conditions regarding land property point towards the Sámi also having utilized areas on the islands (for example, all of North Fugløy) on a seasonal basis. These seasonal dwelling places were nevertheless given up sometime at the end of the Late Middle Ages, which Bratrein connects with the transition to a combination economy. As a consequence, several of the earlier seasonal dwelling places were now taken over by Norwegians, who began to pay the Sámi fees for using them (see chap. 5). According to Bratrein, this process took place during the fifteenth century and early sixteenth century.⁹⁶

Further south, in South Troms and in Ofoten, northern Nordland, corresponding transition processes may have started even earlier. In South Troms, it seems that the Sámi population, whose previous form of production had been based on hunting and fishing, went through an economic transformation process from the middle of the fourteenth century.⁹⁷ Parts of the population focused on maritime resources and changed to specialized stockfish production in combination with agriculture. The main indication of this change is the establishment of permanent farms in the fjord as witnessed by a number of farm mounds. Farm mounds are accumulations of household refuse, building remains, and manure resulting from long-term stability in the location of farm buildings. Radiocarbon datings of bottom layers of farm mounds in the fjords of South Troms show

⁹⁴ Bratrein 1989.

⁹⁵ Søbstad 1980.

⁹⁶ Bratrein 1989.

⁹⁷ Hansen 1990b.

that the farms were established in the fourteenth century or in the first decades of the fifteenth century, and this also included Sámi farms. At the same time, there is reason to believe that there were still some Sámi who wished to focus on hunting and trapping and to keep a nomadic way of life. These Sámi may have sought a closer connection to the inland *siidas* on the Swedish side, where this way of life was still practiced though perhaps in combination with small-scale reindeer herding.⁹⁸

In the case of Ofoten as well, Oddmund Andersen asserts that the growth of Coastal Sámi farms can be followed through the rise of farm mounds.⁹⁹ Yet here, the process may have already started in the High Middle Ages with the formation of farm mounds at Sámi dwelling places in outer Ofoten. Sámi farm mounds that originated in the Late Middle Ages are mainly concentrated in the inner fjord area. Andersen connects the growth of the Sámi farm mounds to a stabilization of the settlement caused by increased agricultural production, animal husbandry, and fishing, as well as resulting from a desire to make greater use of trade connections.¹⁰⁰ Later, Andersen argued for early livestock keeping in connection with individual dwelling places in the inner valley districts and on the isthmuses, which were later known as *marka-Sámi* farms (or 'outland' Sámi farms).¹⁰¹ Changes in vegetation documented by pollen analysis (for example, increased quantities of grass pollen while tree pollen shows a strong decline) on the farm Hoantas/Nipen in Skånland might suggest the existence of hay meadows or grazing pastures as early as the Late Iron Age, but more probably from the twelfth or thirteenth century. From that time, there is also an increased spread of several species that can be associated with grain cultivation, although grain cultivation as such has not yet been proven.¹⁰²

In conclusion, therefore, it seems that the Sámi population along the coast chose various economic and social strategies during the Middle Ages. Within different regions, there was a long series of readjustments that involved changing emphasis and priority in terms of the utilization of local resources, and consequently, in the occupations chosen. These processes of change were, of course, influenced by contacts with neighboring peoples and the existence of external structures such as trade networks.

⁹⁸ Mulk 1995, Hedman 2003.

⁹⁹ Andersen 1992.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 158–161.

¹⁰¹ Andersen 2002.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 404–406.

The considerable variation in the Coastal Sámi's economic strategies nevertheless demonstrates that it would be wrong to speak of a purely passive 'adaptation' to external factors.

4.3.4 *Hunting Communities in the Interior*

In the interior, the hunting economy still appeared to be dominant in most areas throughout the Middle Ages, although significant changes did take place including an increasing importance of reindeer pastoralism. In the previous chapter, we saw how the utilization of the inner parts of Norrland intensified at the end of the Iron Age as witnessed both by the hearth row sites in the boreal forest region and the Stallo sites in the mountain area. Finds of arrowheads and excavated pitfalls show that wild reindeer hunting was still carried out during the Middle Ages and into the Early Modern period. A new technological element in later wild reindeer hunting seems to be stone drift fences, parallel to those of the Varanger peninsula.¹⁰³ Information from other parts of the Sámi area, like Torne and Kemi lappmark, might suggest that such trapping fences of wood or stone gradually replaced the pitfall systems in the last phase of reindeer hunting.¹⁰⁴

In the South Sámi area, there are indications that pit hunting for moose continued through the Late Middle Ages. In Innerdalen in Kvikne, Tynset village, eighty-five pitfalls for moose in several systems across the valley have been documented. Datings show several phases of use that cover the late Iron Age, the Early Middle Ages and the Late Middle Ages.¹⁰⁵ Three oval turf house sites were also found in the area—not unlike the house site of the Stallo type (see chap. 3). Gustafson connects these houses with Sámi use of the area, and ¹⁴C datings from the fireplaces suggest a phase of use between 1400 and 1650.¹⁰⁶

At the same time, small game hunting, bird trapping, and lake fishing must also have made important contributions to the household. The possibility of documenting this archaeologically is, unfortunately, made difficult by the fact that there are far fewer dwelling places with preserved bone material in the interior than along the coast. At some of the sites where bones have been found, such as at dwelling places in the Lule river valley in northern Sweden and Sompio, in northern Finland, they give the

¹⁰³ Vorren 1944, 1998; Mulk 1995, 168.

¹⁰⁴ Torneåus 1900; Tegengren 1952; Manker 1960.

¹⁰⁵ Gustafson 1987; Fjellheim 1999, 55.

¹⁰⁶ Gustafson 1987, 1988; see Bergstøl 2008, 221.

impression of a varied resource base.¹⁰⁷ In this respect, the dwelling place Juikenttä on the Mutenia river in Sompio is of special interest. This site has both an early settlement phase dating from the end of the Early Metal Period and a younger phase that seems to have begun around AD 1200 and to have ended in the seventeenth century. The last settlement phase is represented by remains of turf huts and very extensive deposits of bone and objects, and is assumed to have been a spring dwelling place within the annual migration cycle of the Sompio *siida*. Among the animal bones, reindeer predominates but there are also a great amount of bones from wood grouse, swan, ducks, geese, and ptarmigan. Species like wolverine, moose, beaver, and marten are sparsely represented, as are birds such as crane and loon. Among the fish bones, pike is best represented, but perch and whitefish have also been found.¹⁰⁸

The finds from the later settlement phase at Juikenttä are very rich and attest to extensive handicraft production in addition to hunting and fishing. The latter activities are evidenced by net sinkers, fishing spear tines, and arrow tips (such as a fragment of a bear spear). Ornaments in the form of brooches, buckles, pendants, needles, and rings attest to trade networks southeastward to Karelia and Novgorod. Objects from southern Scandinavia and central Europe also found their way here, which Christian Carpelan connects with the Birkarls' activity.¹⁰⁹ Objects and animal bones were found together in very rich refuse deposits from the households. Remarkably, many of the objects such as knives were intact, and thus Carpelan claims the deposits could have been sacrifices. The find of a drum hammer and traces of a possible cult house in the middle of the deposits could support this idea, as does the fact that the clergymen in Kemi lappmark speak of a large sacrificial site in this area in the seventeenth century.¹¹⁰ Moreover, the finds at the somewhat later winter dwelling place Nukkumamoki 2 near Inari, which was used in the sixteenth and seventeenth century, suggest extensive sacrifices.¹¹¹

A possibly parallel site was investigated by Russian archaeologists at Salma on the north side of Lake Lovozero on the Kola Peninsula. This site also contained finds from the Early Metal Period, the Middle Ages, and the Early Modern period. As at Juikenttä, imported metal objects were

¹⁰⁷ See Mulk 1995; Hedman 2003.

¹⁰⁸ Carpelan 1975, 63–64.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 64.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 67.

¹¹¹ Carpelan et al. 1996, 10–11; Carpelan 2001, 293.

found, such as iron knives, and the location has also been interpreted as a sacrificial site rather than a dwelling place.¹¹² The fact that whole—and many of them imported—objects seem to have been sacrificed, in particular at Juikenttä, may support Odner's and Mulk's hypothesis that such deposits could have a socially stabilizing function in society. By taking imported status objects out of circulation through sacrifice, these communities sought to minimize the destructive social effects that individual accumulation of such items could cause (see chap. 3.9 above).

In the northern part of Swedish Norrland, Sven Donald Hedman has noted a change in the faunal material on inland sites, primarily sites with stone hearths.¹¹³ While the material from the Iron Age is varied and contains a large portion of fish, the bones from the Viking Age and Middle Ages reflect a more extensive use of reindeer and moose, while fish seems to disappear from around 1300. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the location of the sites now seems to change from the lake shores to places where access to pasture seems more imperative and they were also restructured in a linear pattern. These hearth row sites also contain deposits of ornaments that connect them to the rich sacrificial sites (metal depots) in northern Sweden in a number of ways (see chap. 3). Hedman interprets this change as a transition to a society that increasingly based its livelihood on domesticated reindeer, much in common with the small-scale forest Sámi reindeer pastoralism that is documented later in this region.¹¹⁴

Other domesticated animals were also probably raised. As noted in the previous chapter, sheep bones were found at an Early Medieval hearth row site at Brodtkorpneset in Pasvik, Norway, and the distribution of skeletal elements indicates that the animals were actually kept at the site. The far most dominant species in the material from this site, however, was reindeer.¹¹⁵ From one of the dwelling places in northern Sweden, Jättans grotta ('the giant's grotto') at Kakirjaure (Gágirjávri), Gällivare, a goat bone has been recovered.¹¹⁶ The find material (such as a clay pipe and newer ceramics) shows, however, that the dwelling place was also in use well into the Early Modern period, and it is possible the goat bone belongs to this later phase. It is also worth noting that bones from saltwater fish from the Atlantic Ocean have also been found at the site. This fish must have been brought

¹¹² Ovsiannikov 1993, 5–6.

¹¹³ Hedman 2003.

¹¹⁴ Hedman 2003, see also Karlsson 2006.

¹¹⁵ Hedman and Olsen 2009.

¹¹⁶ Mulk 1995, 176.

there from the Norwegian coast,¹¹⁷ and the goat bone could also be a result of exchange of goods with that population. From the South Sámi area, bones from sheep or goats have been found in a lake grave from the thirteenth century at Vikarsjøen, Härjedalen, and goat hides were found in three of the graves from Vivalen. Bones of sheep and goats were also found at sacrificial Sámi sites in the northern Swedish interior.¹¹⁸ This was also the case with a Sámi grave from Västra Abbelvatsundet, Tärna, dated to the sixteenth century.¹¹⁹

Moreover, bones of small game have also been detected in the material from dwelling places in northern Sweden and Finland, and also from several of the sacrificial sites. To what degree the various species of small game may have had nutritional significance also depends on existing cultural codes of 'edibility.' For example, from later centuries, there are cases of the Sámi considering the hare to be 'impure.'¹²⁰ Regardless of the meat's significance, however, we know that furs from species like fox, beaver, marten, squirrel, and weasel were coveted trade goods throughout the Middle Ages.¹²¹ This significance can be seen in different ways. The 'gray squirrel,' that is, the gray winter coat of the red squirrel, was the fur that was most often mentioned in written medieval sources. In Pite Sámi, the term for squirrel, *årre* (cf. South Sámi *åruve* and North Sámi *oarri*), was also used to mean 'money'.¹²² In 1548, the conscription tax (*leidang*) in Trøndelag was normally paid with butter and flour, with two exceptions: Tydal and Gauldal. Here the tax was paid mainly in 'gray squirrel.' Knut Bergsland raised the question of whether it could have been the Sámi who paid Tydalen's pelt tax via the farmers.¹²³

4.3.5 *Settlement Discontinuity or Change?*

Some time into the Late Middle Ages, interruptions in the use of the Stallo sites seem to have occurred in the mountain zone constituting the northern border between Norway and Sweden. Mulk's early investigations from Lule river valley indicate that settlement associated with the Stallo houses diminishes during the fifteenth century. No dates suggest that such

¹¹⁷ Mulk 1995, 90–91.

¹¹⁸ Zachrisson 1997, 150.

¹¹⁹ Schanche 2000, 335.

¹²⁰ Claussøn Friis 1632, 406; Nickul 1948, 180.

¹²¹ Zachrisson 1997, 229–230.

¹²² Fjellström 1985, 65.

¹²³ Bergsland 1970, 400; Zachrisson 1997, 232.

constructions were built or occupied in the period 1450–1650. After the middle of the seventeenth century, however, a new usage or reuse phase commences.¹²⁴ Storli's investigations from Lønsdalen in Saltfjellet reveal a similar picture. The majority of datings in that location are from the end of the ninth century to the last half of the fourteenth century. Here, too, there is a secondary settlement after 1650, following a break of 200–300 years.¹²⁵ The most recent and extensive study of the chronology of the Stallo house sites, conducted by Lars Liedgren and Ingela Bergman, suggests an even longer hiatus, indicating that the main phase of occupation ended in the twelfth century and that only sporadic reoccupation can be identified at these sites in the seventeenth or eighteenth century.¹²⁶

What does this discontinuity in the use of the Stallo sites mean? Was it due to a decrease in the use of the mountain areas, or is the explanation rather a change in utilization? Storli sees this fallow period in the perspective of the large, metal-rich sacrificial sites going out of use in the middle of the fourteenth century and Zachrisson's suggestion of the Black Death as a possible cause.¹²⁷ In the same way that the plague resulted in a phase of desolation in Norwegian farming society, Storli thinks the Sámi society may have undergone a corresponding crisis.¹²⁸ New data concerning the chronology of the Stallo sites, however, strongly challenges this hypothesis. Moreover, more recent radiocarbon dates from the metal-rich sacrificial sites suggest that their use did not discontinue.¹²⁹ Rather, it seems that in the mid-fourteenth century, there was a change in what people deposited at the sacrificial places, most conspicuously marked by the termination of metal artifacts. However, animals continued to be sacrificed far into the later centuries.

Based on her investigations in the Lule river valley, Mulk has suggested that a new type of settlement appeared in the mountain region from the Late Middle Ages. These settlements contained open oval or circular stone-built hearths, in contrast to the earlier stone-filled rectangular hearths at the hearth row sites.¹³⁰ In addition, these hearths very often contained 'arms' of stones running from one side of the hearth in a v-shaped pattern. This type of hearth appeared mainly from the late

¹²⁴ Mulk 1995, 141–143.

¹²⁵ Storli 1991, 28–31; 1995, 5, 19.

¹²⁶ Liedgren et al. 2007; Liedgren and Bergman 2009; see also chapter 3.

¹²⁷ Storli 1995; Zachrisson 1984, 96.

¹²⁸ Storli 1994, 127.

¹²⁹ Mulk 2005.

¹³⁰ Mulk 1994, 47–150.

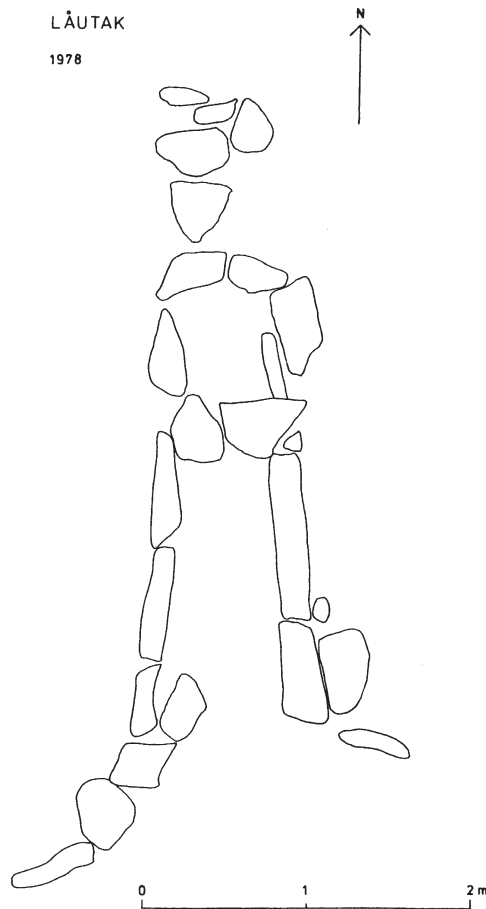


Fig. 33. Hearth with “arms” from Låutak, Sirkas, Lule lappmark. North of the fire-place flat “boassjo” stones have been laid while stone “arms” run toward the door section. (from Mulk 1994.)

fourteenth century onwards. Their number became limited in the fifteenth century, but seems to have increased during the sixteenth century, only to grow exponentially after 1600. A fairly similar chronological pattern has been suggested for identical hearth sites in the Varanger area.¹³¹ Mulk interprets the fireplaces as the remains of tent sites where the converging ‘arms’ are related to the internal partitioning of floor space (see box text:

¹³¹ Schanche 2005.

The Turf Hut as Microcosm). These sites also display a different spatial patterning than the earlier sites by being placed at a greater distance from each other, and can be understood as an expression of greater mobility and increased importance of the individual household. Many hearths of this type, moreover, are located close to what were later pastoral migration routes, where other material traces of reindeer herding are preserved as well. Mulk therefore thinks that these hearths are the first firm evidence of an emerging pastoral reindeer nomadism. The more individual and scattered localization of the hearths is interpreted as an expression of new socio-economic needs as well as the changes in the settlement pattern brought about by reindeer herding.¹³²

The discontinued use of old hunting sites and the spread of the new type of hearth sites thus suggests a departure from the settlement pattern and modes of production associated with the row-organized hearth and the Stallo house sites. As the material is presented by Mulk, this change represents a transition towards more specialized and extensive reindeer herding at the end of the Middle Ages. As mentioned, other investigations from northern Sweden have suggested a much earlier transition to reindeer pastoralism.¹³³ These results are not necessarily incompatible with Mulk's proposal, as they mainly concern small scale reindeer herding of the forest Sámi type, while Mulk's interpretation relates to a more specialized and extensive nomadic mode of pastoral livelihood.

This notwithstanding, it is still important to keep in mind that the extent of reindeer herding even in the sixteenth century generally seems to have been very modest in relation to later levels of 'full nomadism' (see chap. 5). The first real description of reindeer pastoralism is found in Olaus Magnus' work from 1555.¹³⁴ In this text, he states that reindeer herds could consist of "10, 15, 30, 70, 100, 300 and even up to 500 animals." The larger estimates, however, should probably be taken with a certain dose of skepticism. If we are to believe King Karl IX's reindeer count from 1605 (see fig. 35 below), the reindeer herds in several of the *siidas* even at this point in time were so small that they reflect a transitory phase in which small-scale pastoralism was combined with a series of other subsistence elements.

Nevertheless, the Middle Ages seem to have constituted a decisive phase for the beginning of reindeer herding in different areas, and, therefore,

¹³² Mulk 1994, 151; 2005; see also Andersen 2002, 2005.

¹³³ Aronsson 1991; Hedman 2003; Karlsson 2006.

¹³⁴ Foote 1998 (book XVII, chap. 27).

it is necessary to analyze this phenomenon more closely. This, on the one hand, requires coming to grips with what reindeer pastoralism actually meant, understood as both a subsistence strategy and in terms of its social consequences as a particular mode of production. On the other hand, it implies returning to the basic questions of what social and economic factors caused the transition from hunting to herding.

4.4 THE RISE OF REINDEER HERDING

The rise of reindeer herding is one of the most discussed issues in Sámi cultural history. This transition implied much more than merely a change in livelihood. Wherever it occurred, this shift was accompanied by fundamental changes in resource access and in the principles of distribution. As such, it is one of the most comprehensive social transformations that Sámi society has undergone. This section addresses the various aspects of this transition process and the explanations provided in previous research.

4.4.1 *Pastoralism and Domestication: The Distinctive Quality of Early Reindeer Herding*

The earliest form of Sámi reindeer herding has been characterized as a form of pastoralism, a concept from the Latin word *pastio* (f.) which means 'pasture', 'grazing', 'feeding'. From this, a mode of production is associated, in which the basis of economic life consists of a herd of living, grazing animals. Moreover, when reindeer begin to be used as a grazing animal or domestic animal, one can also speak of domestication, often translated as 'taming'. This concept has roots in the Latin word *domus* (f.), which means 'house', 'home', or 'household'. It is therefore reasonable to construe domesticated animals as 'tied to the household'. Keeping a certain number of tame animals, is, however, not a sufficient requirement for using terms such as pastoralism or reindeer herding. At least since the late Iron Age, the Sámi kept a small number of tame reindeer that were used as draft reindeer for transportation purposes or as decoy animals during hunting. This kind of human-reindeer relationship may actually have existed far back into the Stone Age. Yet in such contexts, the tame reindeer are to be understood more as technology or a means of production within an economy based on hunting and fishing. This form of use cannot, therefore, be characterized as pastoralism or domestication in the true sense of the word.



Fig. 34. Fireplace belonging to an early reindeer herding tent dwelling in the Kobbelv area, Sørfold, Nordland. (Photo: Lars Ivar Hansen.)

Crucial to the use of these two terms is that people exert conscious control over the reproduction of the animal herd: animals are removed from their original reproductive milieu, that is, the tame reindeer herds are kept separate from wild reindeer so as to avoid uncontrolled mating; the animals are guarded while grazing and selection is determined through controlled slaughtering. Thus, the term pastoralism should be reserved for conditions in which reindeer herds are kept under control in order to utilize them systematically for subsistence or exchange. In a pastoralist economy, the domesticated herd is considered and treated as a major source of subsistence because of the products that the animals can supply, either alive, through milking, or dead, through meat and fur. By systematically selecting breeders with desired characteristics, the herd's genetic qualities are also affected over time.¹³⁵

The earliest form of reindeer herding among the Sámi was characterized by a close relationship between people and animals in which the herd was guarded with great care. Some bull reindeer were slaughtered before the rut in the fall; otherwise, the main slaughter took place in November. At the same time, a relatively large number of bull reindeer

¹³⁵ Bökönyi 1989, 22; Clutton-Brock 1989, 7.

were kept as draft reindeer or transport animals. The slaughter was characterized by a high degree of utilization: meat, blood, sinews, hide, antlers, and bones were important products. Important foodstuffs also came from milk, such as cheese, butter, and frozen and cultured milk. This form of reindeer herding is therefore also called a milk economy or dairy reindeer herding.

This form of reindeer herding requires the herd to be guarded intensively all year round. To achieve this, local topography and environmental features that helped control the movement of the herd were cleverly utilized, such as closed off valleys and confined grazing areas. Simple stone and wooden devices at strategic crossing places in the landscape were also constructed, such as blocking fences. In connection with milking, which occurred during the summer, the herd was often driven into fenced-in milking corrals or to promontories and headlands that could easily be closed off.

The settlement pattern, land use, and site organization in pastoralist societies differed in important respects from those of hunting societies. Hunting societies moved between clearly-defined, seasonal dwelling places located in different resource areas within a given territory. These seasonal sites were differentiated according to their social and economic functions, resulting in a varied repertoire of dwelling sites and camps. After the emergence of reindeer pastoralism, the settlement pattern became more dependent on the herd's need for pastures. Dwelling sites become more homogeneous, because a large portion of the infrastructure is brought along on migrations, and also because the social unit is less seasonally differentiated. Moreover, these sites are also distributed more widely throughout different resources areas and terrains. Due to herding and migrations, traces of such sites also appear in areas that would not be considered very productive from the perspective of a hunting economy. Moreover, the shifting needs to have access to pasture makes the territories less fixed and characterized by flexible borders.¹³⁶ As noted above, in the Lule river valley, Mulk has identified changes in site type and organization from the end of the Late Middle Ages that may well reflect a transition to reindeer pastoralism. Similar changes have been observed by Andersen at the same time or somewhat earlier in Riebevággi (Revdalen) in Skånland, South Troms.¹³⁷ Others have suggested an even

¹³⁶ See Cribb 1991; Mulk 1995, 25–26.

¹³⁷ Andersen 1999, 14–15; 2002; Andersen 2002, 2005.

earlier pastoralist 'signature' in the material from interior settlements dating to the Viking Age and the Early Middle Ages, most notably the Stallo and the hearth row sites.¹³⁸ The most radical interpretation chronologically, however, has been proposed by Kjell-Åke Aronsson, who, based on pollen analysis, claims to have traced botanical signatures of reindeer herding back to the Early Iron Age.¹³⁹ Although domesticated animals may have been kept for various purposes far back in time (for example as decoy and draught animals), there is still little archaeological evidence in support of reindeer herding as a mode of livelihood in such an early period.

4.4.2 *Origin and Spread: Hultblad's Model*

In 1968, the Swedish researcher Filip Hultblad put forth a hypothesis that pastoralism had arisen in the central and southern Sámi settlement areas on the Swedish side, more specifically in the areas within Ume lappmark, and from there spread northward and southward.¹⁴⁰ His argument was primarily based on a statistical analysis of the reindeer count that the Swedish King, Karl IX had ordered in 1605 (see chap. 5). From this survey, it appears that reindeer herding emerged in the central and southern lappmarks on the Swedish side and developed in these areas up to ca. 1600. The northernmost area where reindeer herding can be detected at this point in time is Rounala *siida*, which was situated at the current junction of the Swedish, Finnish, and Norwegian borders. Further north and east, in the interior of present-day Finnmark and in Kemi lappmark, a pastoralist economy did not yet exist. The few reindeer that the Sámi kept there were draft and decoy animals.

Hultblad's view is that early Sámi reindeer herding with an emphasis on the dairy economy was a result of Scandinavian cultural impulses. Through close trading with Norwegian farmers in southern Nordland, the Sámi would have picked up their methods and terminology for domestic animal-keeping and adapted them to reindeer herding. Hultblad found key support for this argument in the fact that the Sámi terminology for milking and using milk comprises a number of Scandinavian loanwords.

¹³⁸ Storli 1993, 1994; Hedman 2003; Liedgren and Bergman 2008, see also Karlsson 2006; Hedman and Olsen 2009.

¹³⁹ Aronsson 1991.

¹⁴⁰ Hultblad 1968, 63.

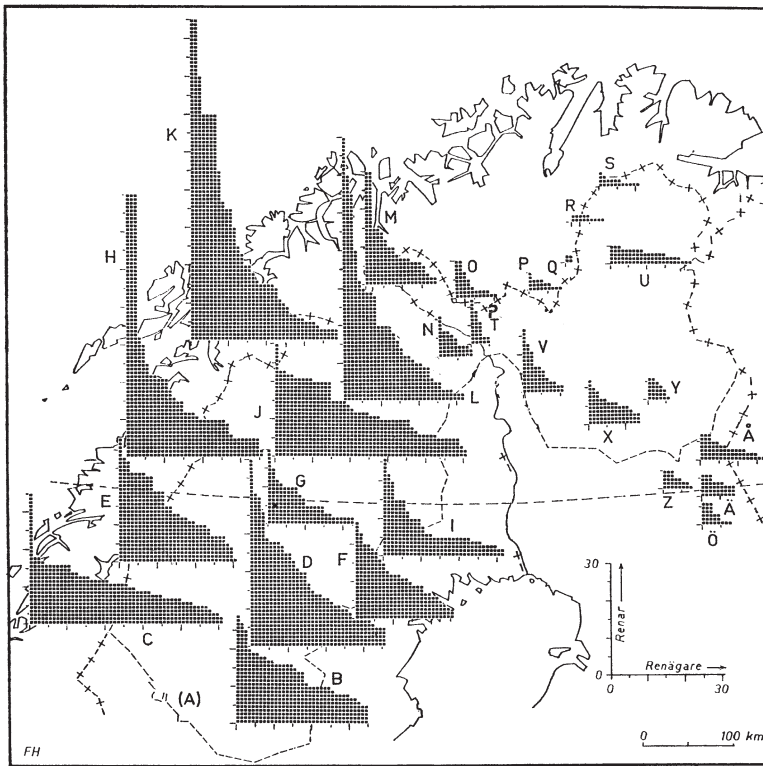


Fig. 35. Number of reindeer count in the siidas on the Swedish and Finnish sides, according to Filip Hultblad's analysis of Charles IV's "reindeer count" from 1605. Horizontal axis: Number of reindeer owners, vertical axis: Number of reindeer. (from Hultblad 1968.)

A similar hypothesis had already been proposed by Helmer Tegengren, who advanced a model that largely agrees with Hultblad's.¹⁴¹

As discussed in the previous chapter, it cannot be assumed, however, that the Sámi automatically adopted the practice and the techniques at the same moment that they incorporated the linguistic terms. There could have been a time lag in both directions: on the one hand, the Sámi could have borrowed foreign terms for techniques they already mastered and for which they already had their own Sámi terminology because the need for communication in an actual trading situation made this desirable. On the other hand, such terms could have been borrowed in connection

¹⁴¹ Tegengren 1952, 197–231; see Storli 1996.

with Sámi sheep/goat or cattle husbandry, and then by analogy have been transferred to reindeer herding that developed later. Both written sources and archaeological material allow for the possibility that the Sámi in Nordland kept goats and sheep during the Viking period. Norse terminology initially adopted in relation to goat- and sheep-keeping could easily have been transferred to reindeer milking in due course.

Most researchers today would reject Hultblad's overly diffusionist model for the origin and spread of reindeer pastoralism as inadequate, as it renders the origin of reindeer herding as a 'natural' spread of cultural impulses from an active and inventive donor culture to a passive, recipient culture. He does not explain *why* the Sámi would have found it appropriate to change their economy from hunting to reindeer herding. Nevertheless, some of his observations as to how pastoralism first emerged and gained a foothold are still valid. In order for us to approach the question of why reindeer herding arose, however, we must try to understand some of the social conditions for pastoralism.

4.4.3 *The Social Conditions of Pastoralism*

Pastoralism brought about changes both in the relationships between animals and people and in the social relationships between people.¹⁴² The very rationale of production changed as well. One of the most important consequences was that reindeer became viewed as individual property and no longer made up a collective resource for all members of the *siida*. To a significant degree, social status became a product of the number of reindeer a person possessed. In hunting societies, the equal right to resources was an enduring ideological principle, which was expressed in the sharing of hunting products. Although reindeer were a source of social status, this status was tied to the hunt and the prestige that fell to the proficient hunter in the ensuing distribution of the prey. The ideology prescribed sharing and equal right to resources, but in order to fulfill this principle, the hunter had to 'be paid' through crediting of individual prestige. In this, we can dimly perceive a latent conflict within the mode of production of hunting societies.¹⁴³

As a sign of their ambitions, the most capable hunters would adorn their arrows with ownership marks. In this way, they could record who had felled the reindeer and who had the right to distribute the prey.

¹⁴² Paine 1971; Ingold 1980.

¹⁴³ Olsen 1987.

Bone arrows with such ownership marks are well documented in the rich dwelling site material from the last millennium BC excavated at Kjelmøy in south Varanger.¹⁴⁴ With the transition to pastoralism, the ownership mark moved from the hunting weapon to the living animal itself, in that the reindeer had the owner's mark cut into its ear. This transfer says a great deal about the changes in the social significance of the reindeer: in the hunting society, the distribution of the hunted prey was the primary source of social status, while in the pastoral society, one attained such status through individual possession of live reindeer.

The development of reindeer pastoralism thus restricted access to one of the most important resources in that reindeer became 'privatized.' The sequence of this transformation process, however, has been highly debated among scholars: did the inner unity and solidarity of the *siida* society break down first as a result of internal oppositions, and thus pave the way for new, more individual modes of production? Alternatively, was it the other way round: did individual actors and households under certain conditions begin considering living reindeer as a resource for food supply and thereby break out of the common interest of the group, with social fragmentation as a result?

4.4.4 *Explanations for the Origins of Reindeer Herding*

In the debate about the origin of reindeer herding, such disagreements are caused by the different explanations advanced. These differences are often the result of the approach adopted: some researchers stress external or internal factors, economic or social mechanisms, while others may adopt a 'structurally-oriented' or 'individualistic' perspective on social processes of change. The explanations of the origin of reindeer pastoralism that have traditionally found most favor in Nordic research have stressed external factors such as taxation, colonization, increased trade contact, and missionary activity. While the earlier hunting society was regarded as having developed an ecological equilibrium between population and resource base, these external factors undermined the original balance. As a result, the Sámi were forced to develop new modes of subsistence. The most explicit variant of this explanatory model is based on the argument that increased trade contact from the middle of the sixteenth century

¹⁴⁴ Solberg 1909; Olsen 1984, 1994.

led to intensified hunting, resulting in the eradication of wild reindeer stocks. To compensate for this loss, the small herds of domesticated reindeer that had previously been kept for transport and decoy purposes were expanded. Some Sámi succeeded very well in this effort and thus developed reindeer pastoralism, while others had to take up other livelihoods.¹⁴⁵

Researchers have also put forth similar arguments that stress internal circumstances. According to one view, a break with the hunting society's social values occurred as a result of individual members of the community—who already had small herds for transport and decoy animal purposes—began to consider the animals as a resource for food supply. Since there was scarcity of provisions, they began to slaughter the reindeer and use them for consumption. Gradually, a conscious effort to breed domesticated animals was taken up with this in mind. The result was the development of a private property relationship to the herds and a social trajectory characterized by fragmentation into smaller, self-supplied household units.¹⁴⁶ Several authors have also suggested that a local crisis, in the form of a lack of food supplies, could have been the triggering cause.¹⁴⁷ In this perspective, the resulting accumulation of domesticated animals may have been seen as insurance against future crises.¹⁴⁸ A different position is taken by Sven-Donald Hedman, who suggests that reindeer herding emerged in close association with the prosperous economies of the Viking Age, and that reindeer herding was actually a means to produce the surplus needed to successfully participate in extensive northern trade networks.¹⁴⁹

Without entirely refusing these explanations, we still find them insufficient to account for the origin of Sámi reindeer herding. The early taming of reindeer for transport and hunting purposes primarily filled technological needs within the hunting economy. The small number of animals required no special work organization, such as is the case with larger herds of hundreds of animals (herding, migrating, gathering, and separating them in connection with calving, earmarking, milking, and slaughtering). Thus, from a technical and organizational viewpoint, it was not a simple operation to expand from having a few domesticated reindeer that fulfilled technological needs

¹⁴⁵ Solberg 1938, 295–296; Tegengren 1952; Vorren 1974, 1977, 149–151; Vorren and Manker 1953, 50; 1957, 71–72.

¹⁴⁶ Ingold 1980.

¹⁴⁷ G. Hatt 1919.

¹⁴⁸ Wallerström 2000, 10–12.

¹⁴⁹ Hedman 2003, 223–230.

to managing large herds within a specialized, reindeer-herding economy. Moreover, what is even more important are the social changes that reindeer herding entailed in the form of private property rights and the consequent limited access to resources. Considering that this is the greatest difference between pastoralism and hunting societies, it is striking how little this point has been addressed in the debate about the origin of reindeer pastoralism. Why, and at what point in time, did individuals begin owning those resources on which the society's economy was based?

Before we attempt to answer this question, it is important to highlight some of the conditions involved. Reindeer herding seems to have arisen at different times in different parts of the Sámi area. Tegengren and Hultblad's suggestion that reindeer herding arose earlier in the west than in the east still seems generally valid, though not unambiguously so given the new investigations of hearth row sites in Pasvik, Finnmark. Since the transition probably occurred at different times in different areas, the explanation of *why* it happened could also vary. With these reservations in mind, we will now discuss other possible explanations for what may have caused this important change in the Sámi way of life.

4.4.5 *Why Reindeer Herding?*

In our opinion, the origin of reindeer herding can be best understood from the interplay between external conditions and the inner dynamics of the local communities, as this is expressed in internal oppositions and new possibilities for action. Throughout this chapter, we have seen how Sámi communities in the High and Late Middle Ages were, if not 'globalized' at least 'regionalized', through incorporation into trade systems and new political regimes. At the same time, Sámi areas were increasingly colonized and new legal principles, new administrations, and new religions were introduced. These external conditions generated changes on several levels.

First of all, cultural encounters and 'the edges' of the contact established could have resulted in an increased questioning of local values, which had previously been taken for granted. Through these encounters between different social forms, economies, and ways of thinking, new tensions and frictions arose. Basic cultural and social values were challenged through missionary activity, trade, and general cultural contact, and to a much stronger degree than before they had to be justified and legitimated.¹⁵⁰ The intensification of ritual and religious expressions among the Sámi

¹⁵⁰ Bourdieu 1977; Giddens 1984.

throughout the Middle Ages should probably be understood within this perspective. Regardless of the result of these reinforcing efforts, the ideological 'cement' was crumbling, creating fertile soil for alternative behavior and rule-breaking. In such a context, one could more easily deviate from the principle of equal distribution.¹⁵¹

Second, these new conditions demanded an immense intensification of production. We would argue that this intensification paved the way for reindeer herding, but in a slightly different way than what earlier models have suggested. Most importantly, it is necessary to look at technological developments during the last phase of wild reindeer hunting and the ensuing organization of work that was developed at that time, such as the use of the large pitfall systems, and more specifically, the use of converging hunting fences (*vuopmanat*) (see fig. 28).¹⁵² What makes these devices interesting is that their technology later became decisive components in the infrastructure of reindeer pastoralism. As Vorren and Manker note, the corrals used by reindeer herders have "gotten their form from the large hunting fences for wild reindeer."¹⁵³ Intensive hunting with these large structures is said to have threatened wild reindeer stocks and to have created a crisis that, in turn, resulted in a pastoral solution. In our opinion, the significance of intensive wild reindeer hunting for the origin of domestic reindeer herding lies in the fact that it developed the necessary technological and organizational foundation that domestic reindeer herding required.

As we have mentioned previously in connection with the hunting systems at Gollevárri and on the Varanger peninsula, hunting was so extensive and complex here that it is unlikely that it could have been operated without an organizational elite. This 'elite,' however, cannot only be seen as a result of the challenges of complex hunting technology. Rather, in order to understand this process it is necessary to assess the internal dynamics of this hunting society. As discussed above, there was a potential inherent conflict in the social functioning of this hunting society, in that the principle of equal distribution was maintained through crediting the individual prestige of successful hunters. Only after being 'paid' in the form of respect and influence would the hunter divide his quarry with the other members of the community. However, the possibility that this prestige could be converted into real, formalized leadership was limited.

¹⁵¹ Olsen 1987.

¹⁵² Olsen 1984, 231–234, 1987.

¹⁵³ Vorren and Monker 1957, 51.

During the Viking Age and the Early Middle Ages, a growing trade network could have fostered greater social inequality, as grave goods from Varanger and other places suggest (see chap. 3). However, it was only in the Late Middle Ages that this latent conflict of inequality became conclusive for the processes of change under discussion here.

Taking as a point of departure the material from Varanger,¹⁵⁴ we can propose the following scenario: external conditions in the form of trade and taxation demanded that surplus production be increased considerably. This need for increased production meant that the most capable hunters were given more latitude and the ideological norms about equality were eased. New and increasingly more complex hunting devices began to be used, to such an extent that hunting eventually required organizational leadership. This development can be said to correspond with the most capable hunters' own ambitions for increased power and influence. Their ambitions could even have had a driving effect on technological development. From that point, these hunters would make up an organizational elite which organized the hunt and they gradually gained control of distribution and trade. The balance between individual ambitions and group solidarity is upset, and equal access to resources becomes strained. This process was eased by the more heterogeneous and complex social milieu that had been created by cultural interactions and the 'new era,' through bringing in new actors, new ways of thinking, and new social and economic networks. Behavior that previously would have been sanctioned or would have been unthinkable could now occur because ideological resistance was no longer obvious or unchallenged.

It does not follow, however, that property rights to living reindeer emerged from these changes. Here we think two circumstances may have had an effect.¹⁵⁵ First of all, the organizational elite could have developed property rights for the hunting systems themselves, or alternately to the reindeer that were caught in them. By using converging fences that terminate in a corral, live animals could also have been caught.¹⁵⁶ Support for this can be seen in the fact that the Sámi Varanger paid a fee to the county governor at Vardøhus for using the hunting systems (*Reengaardene*): "Varanger Finns also gave to the county governor on All Saints' Day, nine *live* reindeer annually, for the hunting systems, that

¹⁵⁴ Olsen 1984, 235–236; 1987.

¹⁵⁵ Olsen 1984, 236.

¹⁵⁶ See Sirelius 1916.

the Finns were allowed to keep across the mountains between Varanger fjord and the Tana river, and at Pers fjord.”¹⁵⁷ Why should one pay such a fee if this hunt did not also comprise catching living animals? These animals could form the basis for creating or adding to domesticated reindeer herds. It is possible that individual animals were selected and socialized into the domesticated herds in order to utilize their special qualities for breeding purposes. Hunting gradually gave way to pastoralism. Another circumstance that could have contributed to the introduction of property rights was the introduction of Norwegian state administration in the area. In this case, property rights were a fundamental legal element. In a situation where Sámi land and Sámi resources were being subjected to ever greater outside control and possession, the Sámi organizational elite may have adopted property rights as a strategy to prevent outsiders from encroaching upon their livelihood.

This development, however, was by no means given or inevitable. Further east in the Skolt Sámi areas, it appears that contact with the Russian church and administration strengthened socially-reproducing institutions within the hunting society and counteracted such development.¹⁵⁸ In this case, wild reindeer hunting never developed to the level observed in Varanger, and domestic reindeer herding only became a predominant form of production very late. Thus, it seems that the distribution system and the collective institutions of Sámi hunting societies disintegrated to varying degrees, depending on external as well as internal conditions. The cautionary tale that emerges is that the transition to reindeer pastoralism could have occurred in different ways and have taken different forms in different regions.

4.5 CULTURAL ENCOUNTERS AND MULTI-ROOM HOUSES

In this chapter, we have focused on how Sámi areas were integrated into economic and political networks that were controlled by powers outside of northern Fennoscandia and seen how Sámi society reacted to these new conditions. Towards the end of the chapter, we shall approach this interaction from a different and more concrete angle by looking at a remarkable settlement structure that appeared along the northernmost coast of Finnmark during the Middle Ages, the ‘multi-room’ houses.

¹⁵⁷ Knag 1694/1938, 21, authors’ emphasis.

¹⁵⁸ Tanner 1929; Storå 1971; Olsen 1987.



Fig. 36. A group of multi-room houses in Løkvik, Berlevåg municipality, Finnmark.
(Photo: Bjørnar Olsen.)

The multi-room house sites are complex structures that appear as a cluster of connected rooms surrounded by a common or continuous outer wall. Rooms, doorways, and other features are still clearly visible on the surface. The rooms, ranging from four to twenty, are internally connected either directly through inter-room doorways or, more commonly, through intermediary corridors or passageways.¹⁵⁹ Thus far, twenty-two multi-room house sites have been found. Radiocarbon dating and finds suggest that the multi-room houses began to emerge around AD 1200 and that their main phase of use lasted until the mid fifteenth century. At some sites, later occupation or reoccupation is recorded, dated to the sixteenth and early-seventeenth centuries.

The multi-room houses are mainly located on the coast of Finnmark County; however, their full distribution extends to Tofteelva on the island of Laukøy in the neighboring county of Troms in the west as well as to Soim just east of the mouth of the Pechenga fjord, Murmansk Oblast, Russia, in the east. This means that all multi-room house sites are located north of the Lyngenfjord and thus the northern limit of the early medieval Norwegian kingdom. Moreover, their distribution is confined to a coastal region that, during the peak of their use, was defined as 'common' to Norway and

¹⁵⁹ Tanner 1929; Simonsen 1981a; Amundsen et al. 2003; Henriksen 2008; Olsen et al. 2010.

Novgorod. As mentioned earlier, in the agreement concluded between Norway and Novgorod at the beginning of the fourteenth century, the border for the purely Norwegian area of taxation was set at Lyngstuva (see fig. 24). From there eastward to Ponoj on the Kola Peninsula, both Russians (Karelians) and Norwegians had taxation and trade rights.

The concentration of multi-room house sites is especially dense in the vicinity of Berlevåg, northwest on the Varanger peninsula. The most complex structures are also found here, such as the one in Kongshavn (Norwegian 'King's Harbor') near the Kjølnes lighthouse east of Berlevåg. This site consists of twenty rooms or compartments inside an approximately circular structure (see fig. 37). The layout is almost fortified, in that it has powerful surrounding walls. Outside the structure, there are traces of a masonry road and a carefully-built stone well. Early on, this conspicuous ruin triggered the curiosity of scholars and travelers and it is interesting to note that they initially interpreted it as a Sámi elite residence. Prominent in this respect was County Governor Hans Lilienskiold, who visited Kongshavn in the late seventeenth century. He described the structure as a "castle ruin," more specifically as the castle of the "Kjølnes king." Lilienskiold connects the ruins to Icelandic accounts and local folklore about Finn (Sámi) kings, and he also recorded a local ballad about the Kjølnes king.¹⁶⁰ While Lilienskiold's bold interpretation was soon forgotten or ignored by later scholars, a more mundane Sámi connection to the multi-room houses was suggested 230 years later by Väinö Tanner. Tanner discovered the easternmost site at Soim while doing geological surveys on the Petsamo coast, and, based on local traditions, he concluded that multi-room houses represented an ancient form of domestic Sámi architecture.¹⁶¹

Several other hypotheses have been proposed regarding the origin of these structures, all of which link the multi-room houses to the new cultural interactions that emerged along the Finnmark coast in the Middle Ages.¹⁶² The hitherto dominant interpretation argues in favor of a Norwegian origin, according to which the multi-room houses are seen as part of the vernacular architecture and settlement structure imposed by early Norwegian fishing communities established in Finnmark from the

¹⁶⁰ Bakke 1976; Simonsen 1976; Henriksen 2008, 2011. This ballad is actually the only one of medieval form known from the Finnmark.

¹⁶¹ Tanner 1928.

¹⁶² Amundsen et al. 2003; Henriksen 2008, 2011.

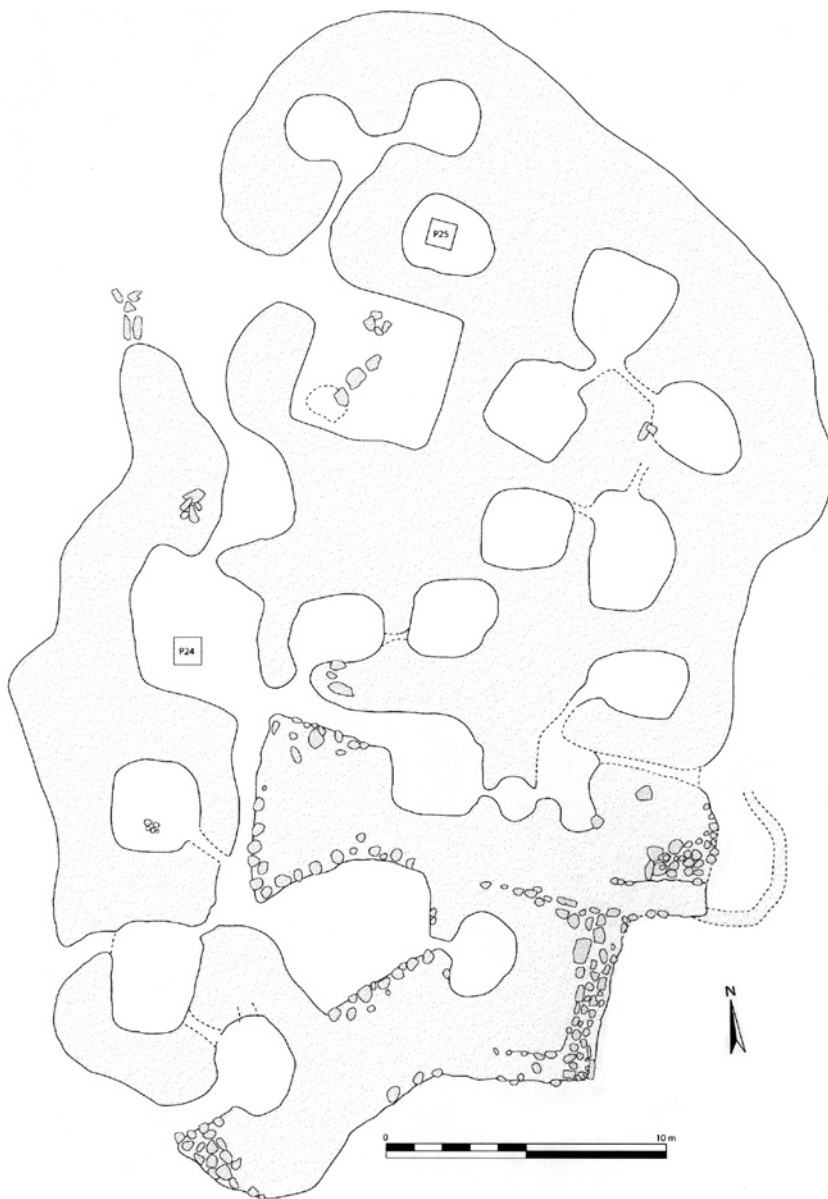


Fig. 37. Outline of a multi-room house site at Kongshavn, Berlevåg municipality.

late thirteenth century.¹⁶³ However, even though the multi-room houses were situated on the outer coastal strip, their location does not generally coincide with the earliest recorded Norwegian fishing settlements in Finnmark and North Troms which were located mainly at the extreme outer coast (see fig. 25 above). Especially along western Finnmark, they actually show closer proximity to the sea-faring route that followed the sounds between the mainland and the large islands. The view of the route—and thus the possibility of watching over it—is usually very good from the multi-room house sites. This fact, as well as the fortified impression of the sites, has generated an alternative hypothesis that argues that the houses were defensive structures (with additional economic and administrative functions), built as a result of the turbulent political situation of medieval Finnmark.¹⁶⁴ As mentioned above, Russian/Karelian attacks on Norwegian settlements along the coast of northern Norway were reported eleven times between 1250 and 1444. From the Norwegian side, they were seen as plundering and harrying raids, but it is perhaps just as relevant to view them as expressions of competing trade interests. This rivalry makes both the Norwegians authorities and Karelian/Novgorodians potential candidates as ‘originators’ for the multi-room houses.

It is hardly a daring hypothesis to connect the multi-room houses to the new and turbulent interactions in the north. They emerged at a time when a significant reshaping of cultural conditions, settlement patterns, and economic and political networks was taking place, adding new dimensions of cultural complexity to this coastal zone. Nonetheless, knowing the context they appeared in does not explain why the multi-room houses were built, who used them, and for what purposes.

These questions were recently addressed in a large, multi-disciplinary research project on the multi-room houses.¹⁶⁵ This project involved extensive archaeological investigations that have provided completely new knowledge about the multi-room houses and the cultural conditions in medieval Finnmark. It also soon became evident that the material from the excavation was not easily classified into any clear-cut cultural or ethnic framework. Rather, the data recovered became timely reminders of the complex and dynamic processes caused by contact situations and urged scholars to consider alternative and more nuanced explanation of the multi-room houses than the ones provided by mono-cultural interpretations.

¹⁶³ Simonsen 1981; Niemi 1983, 1997.

¹⁶⁴ Bratrein 1996.

¹⁶⁵ Olsen et al. 2011.

The major excavations carried out at the large Skonsvika and Kongshavn sites near Berlevåg reveal an intriguing picture of medieval cultural conditions on this northern coast. Despite the two sites being located less than 10 km apart and being closely-related architecturally, the recovered material represented very different cultural connections. Kongshavn yielded material very closely associated with southern Norwegian medieval culture, with few signs of production beyond site consumption (in fact, some culinary items seem to have been imported from the south). This Norwegian cultural affiliation, its location (including its name), and massive appearance suggest that this site was a kind of royal stronghold in the north. Skonsvika, on the other hand, almost completely lacked this western Scandinavian material. Rather, the material here exhibited numerous eastern links. Moreover, archaeological, zoological, and soil chemical data suggest a site seriously involved in processing (and possibly trading in) furs. It is important to note that these sites on the northern coast of the Varanger peninsula were in use at the very same time that the massive trapping of reindeer took place at Gollevarre and in the interior



Fig. 38. Oven uncovered during the excavations of a multi-room house in Skonsvika, Berlevåg municipality. (Photo: Bjørnar Olsen.)

of the peninsula. Given its eastern affiliation and economic orientation, Skonsvika was most likely a Novgorodian trading station or *pogost*, possibly also with administrative and even military functions.¹⁶⁶

Nevertheless, despite these differences, there are also some conspicuous similarities between these two sites concerning daily life, production, and consumption. In particular, there are commonalities in the faunal deposits in terms of species diversity, skeletal parts, and the unique styles of butchery practices observed on fish bones.¹⁶⁷ The latter in particular suggests that among the populations of these two otherwise functionally different sites, there were people who has shared skills and backgrounds. Although caution needs to be taken, there are clues suggesting that the congruencies observed in the distinctive butchery marks on the bone material reflect Sámi skills in cleaning and processing fish—in other words, local Sámi were recruited to conduct special tasks at, or in relation to, the sites. Outside these multi-room houses in Norway and Russia, similar cut marks have not been found elsewhere, except in the faunal material from a Late Medieval/Early Modern Sámi site in Varanger, Šaggušnjaŕ'ga.¹⁶⁸ Other distinctive features, such as the fishhooks from Skonsvika that contain a line extension (cordage) made of sinew (or strips of leather) rather than bast or hemp are probably also indicative of Sámi traditions. Moreover, among the artifacts recovered from Skonsvika and Kongshavn there are additional objects which indicate Sámi presence; in particular, animal tooth amulets and numerous bone objects such as a purse bar decorated with traditional Sámi patterns. The numerous fragments of cut bronze or copper alloy are also conspicuous elements of the inventories at Sámi medieval and Early Modern sites. The shared preference for crowberry observed in the macro fossil material is another possible reflection of Sámi culinary habits.¹⁶⁹

The multi-room houses themselves, however, have no predecessors in Norwegian, Karelian, Russian, or Sámi domestic architecture. Strangely, very similar building traditions are found across the Atlantic in the medieval Iceland (and Norse West Greenland) passage-way farm house (Norwegian *ganghus*). Given the historical evidence about illegal Icelandic (and English) trade on the Finnmark coast in the Middle Ages, it may be the case that the architectural competence associated with western Atlantic vernacular turf architecture constituted the seeds of the multi-

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ Amundsen 2011.

¹⁶⁸ See Odner 1992, 148–151.

¹⁶⁹ Engelmark 2010.

room houses. These seeds arrived through traders and sailors who, in order to settle in this new region, were forced to mediate their habitual knowledge with local conditions and needs. Initiated as dwellings for traders and their boat crews, the multi-room houses may have proved suitable and adaptable for other traders and tax collectors (Norwegian and Russian/Karelian), and even for naval and administrative functions that involved the control and taxing of trade.¹⁷⁰

This possible explanation of their origin notwithstanding, during the medieval period the northern coastal region that contained the multi-room houses became transformed into a meeting ground for natives and newcomers arriving from both the West and the East. From the thirteenth century onwards, the native Sámi population found itself increasingly involved in networks of trade and taxation. The flow of people, commodities, and practices brought about a direct and compressed articulation of cultural differences that had formerly been set apart, and which obviously caused a need for learning and negotiations. The medieval creation of a new and diverse cultural environment was perpetuated in the multi-room house sites. They were undoubtedly satellite settlements initiated from afar and administrated by representatives of distant powers, but dependent on local Sámi participation in everyday affairs and in order to gain access to local supplies and networks.

As suggested by the archaeological material, certain activities such as fishing, fish processing, and probably also hunting and gathering may have been carried out by Sámi personnel staying permanently or seasonally at the sites. Being native to the area, they possessed detailed local knowledge of fishing (both salt- and freshwater) and hunting grounds, and of turf and wood sources; they knew where to dig for bait and the range of edible plants and where to find them. As native inhabitants, they could navigate the local seascape, read the weather signs, and knew the routes of inland travel. They also possessed well-adapted technological means to move in these waters and across land in terms of small boats, skis, and reindeer-pulled sledges. Moreover, in negotiations with other Sámi groups such as those hunting at Gollevárre or Noaidecearru, their cultural and linguistic competence was vital as were their local networks maintained by kinship ties and other social relations. These ties may even have helped negotiate relations between those in charge at Skonsvika and Kongshavn or at least constituted an efficient means of contact and interaction between the sites.

¹⁷⁰ Olsen et al. 2010.

Thinking of these sites as ethnically mixed, with foreigners and indigenous peoples living and working together, may seem strange in relation to the mono-cultural alternative that has been traditionally preferred in much historical research on northern cultures. However, operating these sites without a Sámi presence would have been much more challenging, and thus seems much less likely, than the collaborative option strongly suggested by the available material. Nor is it necessary to inscribe this culturally-mixed site into another all-too-common narrative of oppression and exploitation, where the natives always fall prey to the calculating motives of colonialists from afar. The Sámi of medieval Finnmark were clearly experiencing a transforming world where new customs, new materials, and new people were entering the local scene. However, we should be careful about seeing this transformation only in terms of loss and infringement. The Sámi, at least some of them, may have found the new situation beneficial and enjoyable, and those working at the multi-room house sites were not deprived of agency or power. Given their importance in production and in crucial local exchanges, they possessed considerable means of power that they could activate if their conditions became intolerable.

4.6 RELIGION AND RITUAL MANIFESTATIONS

Up to this point, we have mainly emphasized the social and economic aspects of the new networks that the Sámi became entangled in during the medieval period. Less has been said about the ritual and religious outcomes of this new interaction, although it has been addressed occasionally (see chapter 4.3). In concluding this chapter, we are therefore going to take a closer look at religious articulations as revealed locally in some of the Sámi communities.

In spite of the fact that the Sámi's trading partners from the High Middle Ages were Christians, active missionary campaigns were nevertheless modest in the period treated here. To be sure, a legal amendment from 1313 states that the Sámi would have their fines reduced by a third in the first twenty years after they allowed themselves to be Christianized,¹⁷¹ but what effect this had is unclear. What we do know is that establishing churches and monasteries was a strategy that the surrounding states

¹⁷¹ NgL III, 1849, 107; Widén 1980, 226.

used in their efforts to gain control over the Sámi area well into the Late Middle Ages. On the Norwegian side, the church in Tromsø, from the mid-thirteenth century, and the one in Vardø, consecrated in 1307, represented the first endeavors in this respect. At both places, fortifications were also built. Throughout the Late Middle Ages, churches were built in a number of fishing stations along the Finnmark coast. The precise number is unclear, but the first overview from 1589 counted seventeen churches that then were in use along the coast of Finnmark.

On the Russian side, a corresponding establishment of Orthodox monasteries occurred, but in contrast to the Norwegian church establishment in Finnmark, the monasteries were also important economic institutions and, to a much greater degree, spearheads for actual colonization (see below, chap. 5.2). In 1417, the first monastery was established on the White Sea at the mouth of the Dvina river. Even more important was the establishment of the monastery at the Solovetskiy islands in the 1420s. For several centuries thereafter, the Solovetskiy monastery would remain a primary place of power in the region. This monastery also initiated the construction of the monasteries on the north side of the Kola Peninsula in the middle of the sixteenth century.¹⁷² These monasteries, in the Pechenga valley and in the town of Kola in the Murmansk fjord near the later border with Norway, were thus built in the midst of the East Sámi settlement area. In the last half of the sixteenth century, moreover, Orthodox chapels were established in most of the East Sámi *siidas*.¹⁷³

How did all this affect Sámi culture and the Sámi's faith and rituals? The Christian influence on Sámi burial customs seems relatively modest. A grave from Ytre Sandvik in Porsanger municipality, dated to AD 1460–1645, contains a slate slab with a carved cross. Russian Orthodox bronze crosses are found in two scree graves from the Late Middle Ages in Vadsø and Gamvik municipalities.¹⁷⁴ The cross shape can also be detected in earlier ornaments (see figs. 12 and 61), but its appearance says little about real Christian influence. Christian influence can, however, be inferred from the decline of scree graves in Finnmark, and especially Varanger, in the Late Middle Ages. Over time, these were replaced by burials in wooden coffins, often located on islands and islets.¹⁷⁵ Near the river Varzuga on the south side of the Kola Peninsula, remains of wooden coffins in Sámi

¹⁷² Storå 1977; Jasinski and Ovsianikov 1993, 16.

¹⁷³ Tanner 1929; Storå 1971.

¹⁷⁴ Schanche 2000.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 336.

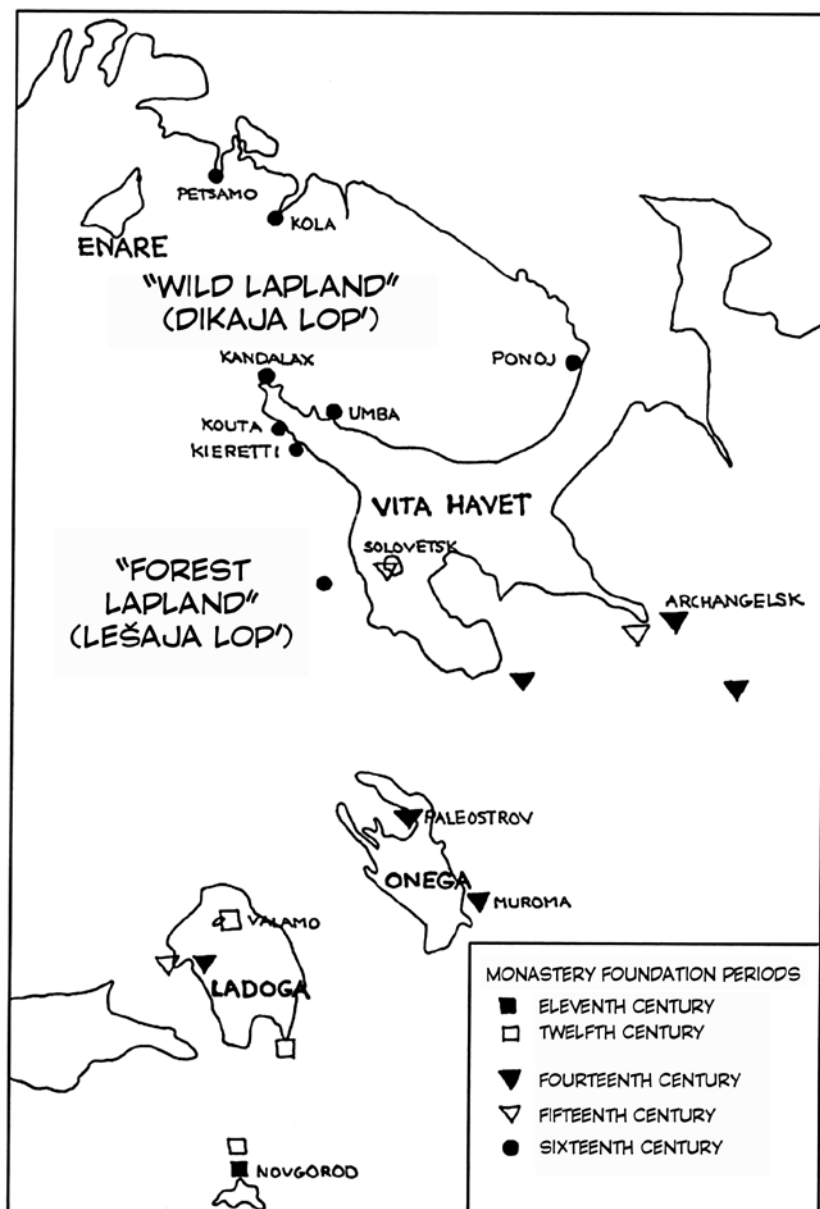


Fig. 39. Map showing the northern advancement of Russian monasteries from the end of the sixteenth century. (from Storå 1977.)



Fig. 40. Circular sacrificial site at Lappojohka, northeast of Guovdageaidnu (Kautokeino). (Photo: Lars Ivar Hansen.)

burials dating back to the eleventh or twelfth centuries have been found.¹⁷⁶ Otherwise, there is little that points to Christian influence.

Nevertheless, church-building and early attempts at missionary activity may have resulted in responses and reactions from the Sámi side. As mentioned above, there are examples in several areas of intensified sacrifice precisely during this period. One type of sacrificial site that has been frequently discussed in the literature is the circular sacrificial site. It consists of a circular stone wall with a diameter normally between 4 and 6 meters. Inside the enclosure, there is a minor cairn of stones, probably a sort of altar for the placement of sacrificial stone (*sieidi*).¹⁷⁷ Circular sacrificial sites are especially numerous in Finnmark, where they have often been found in association with scree graves. The chronology of these constructions is very uncertain, but they are not known to have been used after the seventeenth century nor do they seem to be associated with the rich hoards and sacrificial sites from the Viking period and Early Middle Ages. The only circular sacrificial site that has been ¹⁴C dated lies on Angsnes/ Paulanjárga in Varanger (the furthest out on Selešnjárga, and only some few hundred meters from the previously mentioned site at Geahčevájnjárga).

¹⁷⁶ Ovsianikov 1993, 6–11.

¹⁷⁷ Vorren and Eriksen 1993.

This site has been dated to AD 1425–1615, and at least shows that these constructions were in use in the latter half of the Middle Ages.¹⁷⁸

HOLY PLACES, *SIEIDIS* AND SACRIFICIAL SITES

In pre-Christian Sámi culture, nature was conceived of as being imbued with soul. Spirits controlled all important places in nature, and everything—animals, plants, rivers, mountains—had a soul. Certain spots were considered especially meaningful and holy, and these could serve as cult places. The most important cult places in pre-Christian Sámi society were sacrificial sites. They could consist of spectacular stone formations, such as mountain knolls and large boulders, but also springs, lakes, and living trees. The objects chosen could in themselves be considered as holy, or they could be understood as haunts for local spirits or as manifestations of the presence of higher powers. Typical also are cleft stone formations, crevices, or openings in mountains that could be interpreted as passages to the gods' worlds (like *Basseuksa*, 'the holy door' in Lule lappmark).

The term for such a sanctuary is *sieidi/siejdde*. Partly, *sieidi* seems to have symbolized larger formations, but partly the term seems to have been used for smaller idols, either in the form of stones with striking shapes, or in the form of carved wooden idols. Sometimes the term also seems to refer to the place where the idol is located, the actual cult place or sacrificial site. The interpretation of *sieidi* has also been somewhat different among scholars. Some consider it to depict the individual god or spirit that was worshiped at the site in question; others have understood it more as the actual sacrificial site's manifestation of power, possibly as an incarnation of the divine beings to whom the sacrificial site is consecrated. The *sieidi* concept appears to have been most common in the northern and, in part, the central portions of the Sámi settlement area, limited to the south around Semisjaur-Njárg and Granbyn on the Swedish side. Further south, other terms seem to have been used, including *storjunkar*, which probably is a relatively late loan from Scandinavian neighbors, although the sacrificial sites have also been related to the *saajvøe* sphere (see chap. 3, the text box *Jábmüid-áibmu*, *Ruohtta-áibmu* and *Saajvøe*—the Worlds of the Dead).

In the North Sámi area, and especially concentrated in Finnmark and northern Troms, there is also a special type of sacrificial site that is often circular. These consist of a stone wall, most often circle shaped, with a diameter of 4 to 6 meters. The height of the wall may have been from 70 to 120 cm. In the center of the ring, there is often a stone cairn or some masonry that may have served as a foundation for the actual *sieidi* stone (possibly the idol) and in part as a repository, i.e. a place for sacrificial gifts.

¹⁷⁸ Sacrificial constructions with some of the same traits have also been found in South Sámi areas, such as Finntjørn in Budalsfjellene and they also date from the Late Middle Ages (Fjellheim 1999, 57; see also Stenvik 1983, Huggert 2000).

In contrast to Christianity and other religions with a professional clergy, there was no exclusive priesthood with control over the cult. To be sure, the *noaidi* (shaman) was the most experienced; he was in charge of the most serious and most significant sacrificial ceremonies and acted on behalf of the collective, but cult ceremonies could also be performed by others both within the actual dwelling (*goahti*) and in connection with private arrangements performed immediately outside. The sacrificial ceremonies probably took place on various levels. In his investigation of the change of religion in Lule lappmark at the turn of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the historian of religion Håkan Rydving distinguishes between three levels, even though recognizing there is some over-simplification in such a classification:

- 1) Sacrificial sites used by the entire *siida* collective in community, or by several *sidas*
- 2) Sacrificial or cult sites used by hunting and migrating parties, in connection with hunting, trapping, or fishing expeditions, or during migration with reindeer
- 3) Sacrificial or cult sites used by the individual family or household unit^h

Sacrifices that took place within the Sámi turf house or the tent likely belong to the third level. This was a widespread practice, but has hardly been discussed by scholars. While the sacrificial sites out in the terrain were primarily the men's arena, the sacrifices in the house were often carried out by women and directed toward female gods. Sacrifices were made especially to *Sáráhkká*, the goddess of birth, but also to her sisters. Such sacrifices often occurred on a daily basis, for example by tossing a little food into the fireplace. As discussed in this chapter, sacrifices could also be given by burying animal offerings in the floor (see fig. 32). Such offerings to the goddesses could be of small animals like sheep or lambs, goats, cats, or chickens, as well as reindeer.

There are several different descriptions of how a sacrifice took place. One offering in the Lule lappmark in the seventeenth century is described as follows: a red thread was sewn through the sacrificial reindeer's ear; then the reindeer was tied up behind the turf hut and killed. The blood that was nearest the heart was preserved. The antlers, the neck vertebrae, the skull, and the hooves were taken to the mountain where the sacrificial site and the *sieidi* stones were. When a man approached the sacrificial site, he took off his cap and bowed. He wiped blood and fat onto the *sieidi* and put the reindeer antlers behind the *sieidi* into an antler fence. The antler fence or barrier served as a boundary marker of the holy area.

At sacrificial sites, thick layers of bones and antlers can be found in many places. The sacrifice of animals often occurred in connection with more or less sacred meals. Marrow was very important at these, and at the sacrificial sites as a rule split marrow bones are found. The sacrifices to the *sieidi* could also occur by smearing it with blood or train oil, and the latter was very

^h Rydving 1983, 98–100.

common among the Coastal Sámi. Liver and the fat from halibut were especially important. In addition, objects were offered in the form of coins and bronze plates (small pieces of clipped bronze).

Sources: Bäckman 1975; Manker 1957; Mebius 1968; Rydving 1993; Vorren and Eriksen 1983.

Further out on the Finnmark coast and eastwards along the Kola coast, there are also stone built labyrinths. Their dating is not clear, but they most likely date from the High Middle Ages and into Early Modern times.¹⁷⁹ The labyrinths exist in large numbers in the White Sea region, especially on the Solovetskiy islands. The labyrinths along the Finnmark coast, on Kola and on the White Sea islands, often found nearby graves and burial fields. These are largely considered to be Sámi graves, even for those on the White Sea.¹⁸⁰ Some scholars have related the labyrinths to the new and stressful situation that church and monastery building entailed.¹⁸¹ One of the most important monastic buildings of the Orthodox church was built in Solovetskiy in the 1420s. The monastery was likely built in an important sacred area for local Sámi and other native communities, containing hundreds of pre-Christian graves and probably sacrificial sites as well.¹⁸² The labyrinths located here and elsewhere along the northern coasts may have been included in pre-Christian grave rites, possibly as a symbolic manifestation of the transition between life and death. When their use intensified in the Late Middle Ages, they and the circular sacrificial sites may have both been an expression of ritual resistance or opposition on the part of the Sámi. The physical manifestation of Christianity in the form of churches and monasteries may have been experienced as a threat to central cultural and religious values. They could have attempted to thwart such a threat by intensifying grave rituals and by linking these and other rites to new and conspicuous material expressions.

Such rites were not necessarily only associated with separate cult spaces in the landscape. The settlement site and the house could also have been the object of increased ritual activity in the Late Middle Ages. As mentioned above, at the site in Vapsgedden, Spildra, a lamb was sacrificed just inside the main entrance (see fig. 32). In the rear of the house, at the back door,

¹⁷⁹ Olsen 1991.

¹⁸⁰ Manyuhin 1996; Martynov 2002.

¹⁸¹ Olsen 1991, 2001; Sörgård 2007; see also Broadbent 2010.

¹⁸² Martynov 2002; Olsen 2002.



Fig. 41. Stone labyrinth at Great Hare Island (Bol'shoj Zajackij), the Solovetskiy Islands, White Sea. (Photo: Bjørnar Olsen.)



Fig. 42. Excavated turf hut dated to the period 1350–1500 at Kjerringneset, Øvre Pasvik, Finnmark. The collection of reindeer bones in front of the hearth may represent sacrifices. (Photo: Bjørnar Olsen.)

there were also deposits of animal bones, such as reindeer, seal, and fish.¹⁸³ Comparable deposits behind the turf house have also been found at the nearly contemporary turf hut investigated by Odner at Geahčevájnjárga.¹⁸⁴ In a Sámi house excavated on the northeast side of Kjerringneset in Pasvik, two collections of reindeer bones were found buried in the floor at the back entrance (see fig. 42). The site is ¹⁴C dated to between AD 1300 and 1500. Just outside the back entrance, a decorated drum hammer was found.

THE SÁMI DRUM

The drum (Norwegian *runebomme*, from the signs having previously been confused with runes) was the most important physical aid for the shaman. There were two ways to use the shamanic drum. First, the *noaidi* used it to transport himself into a trance and undertake journeys in other states of consciousness. For this purpose, he drummed on the skin by means of a T- or Y-shaped hammer, made of reindeer antler. This is likely the most original use; in any case, it is the use that is discussed earliest in the written sources (e.g. the depiction in *Historia Norvegiæ*). Secondly, the drum could be used to prophesize. The shaman was not the only one who could use the drum, however. In all likelihood, it was common to have a drum for this purpose in every household. On the drum, a pointer (*arpa*)—either a brass ring or a piece of reindeer antler—was laid. When one beat on the drum with the hammer, the pointer moved among the various figures on the drum skin. From the pointer's movements, a skilled person could interpret the will of the higher powers and, for example, read out fortune and misfortune, or how one should best proceed in individual difficult and critical situations, how one should best hunt a particular animal, how one should find a reindeer that had gotten lost, or the best way to cure an illness.

The shape of Sámi shaman drums varied from region to region. One can divide them into groups based on the actual construction or the fundamental pattern in the decorations on the drum skin. From the South Sámi area, both a frame type, in which the skin is stretched over an oval wooden frame, and a round type made from a self-grown tree ring are known. Both these drum types are called *gievrie*. Further north, from the Pite Sámi area to Finnmark, the bowl type was the norm. The skin in these drums was stretched over a hollowed-out wooden bowl, with openings cut into the bottom that formed a handgrip. This type of drum was called *goabdes* (Lule Sámi), *goavddis* or *meavrresgárri* (North Sámi). The drum could be fitted out with various hanging items and ornamental objects that had different meanings.

¹⁸³ Grydeland 1996, 30–31.

¹⁸⁴ Odner 2001, 32–33.

The drum skin was decorated with figures and divisions that probably represented a sort of microcosm, a reflection of the universe with its division into different spheres and worlds with different gods. Among the images are found a series of symbols for the personified powers or divine figures. Figures with characteristic equipment are identified as Vearelden álmaj (the world's sovereign), possibly alongside Hovrengaellies (the thunder god) and Biegkålmaj (the wind god). Beyond this, there is an entire series of symbols, both of a more abstract character and with signs pointing toward more concrete phenomena taken from Sámi daily life. Thus, both the realm of the dead

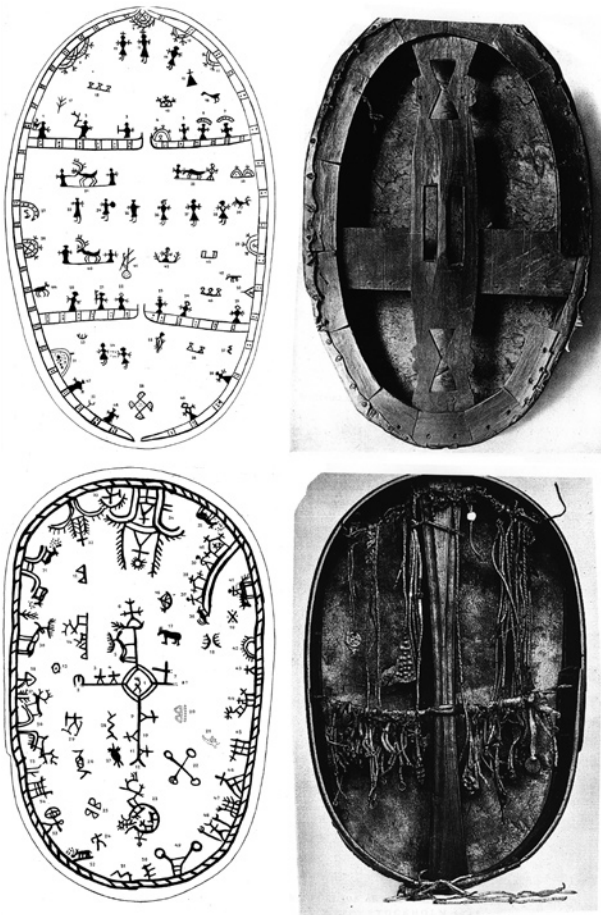


Fig. F. Drawing of the surface and photograph of the bottom of two Sami drums. The upper one, from Kemi Lappmark, has, like several other northern drums, a division into three fields/"spheres," with an opening in between. The lower drum is a South Sami type with the characteristic symbol for the sun and the four heavenly directions at the center. (Reproduced from Manker 1938 and 1950).

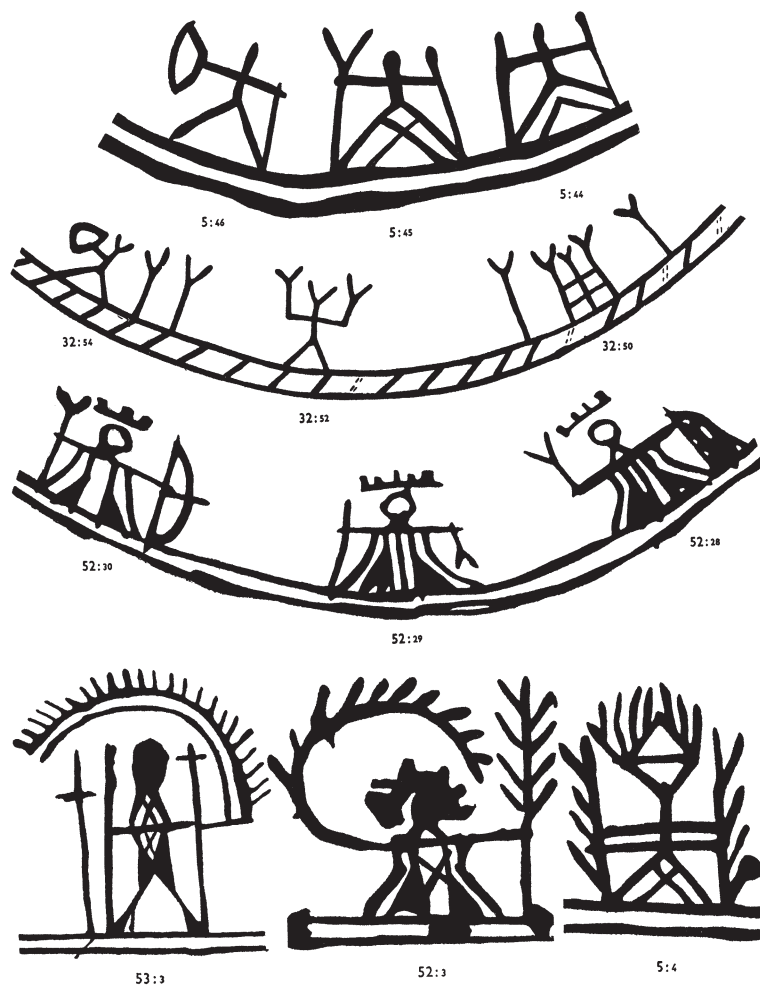


Fig. G. Group figures on the drums: At top three different depictions of the female goddesses Sáráhká, Uksáhká and Juksáhká, with the last mentioned ("the bow goddess") furthest to the left. At the bottom divine images with various fertility symbols like branches and reindeer antlers, probably depictions of Vearelden álmaj ("the world's sovereign"). (Reproduced from Manker 1950).

(*jábmüid-áibmu*) and the path to the realm of the dead, along with the demon of death, Ruohitta, are found. There are also animal figures such as reindeer, bear, beaver, and wolf, as well as Sámi driving in reindeer sleds alongside signs that give information about the dwelling places of the Sámi (the living) and the quarters of resident settlers. Even Christian church buildings are depicted, probably because the Sámi construed them as powerful phenomena within the Christian sphere.

Since the drum was so closely tied to Sámi religion, it became a symbol of heathendom among the missionaries and clergymen. A number of drums were thus destroyed and burnt, but some were sent to Stockholm or Copenhagen for preservation. Of course, some were hidden away by the Sámi themselves and were found later. Today, approximately seventy drums are extant, most of which are at the Nordiska museet in Stockholm. As recently as the 1990s, remnants of a hidden drum were found in the South Sámi area.

In accordance with Sámi tradition, the back room (*boaššu*) was a holy place in the house and the tent (see box text: The Turf House as Microcosm). It was the place where hunting weapons and drums were kept. The back door also had special significance. Only men could use it; game and fish had to be brought in that way and the drum as well—it was called ‘the bloody door’ (milk products and other items were taken in through the front door). Gustav Ränk pointed out that the back door of the turf house was also a place where men carried out sacrifices.¹⁸⁵ The connection between back door and sacrifice becomes especially interesting if we see them in connection with information from the missionary, Gabriel Tuderus, who worked in Kemi lappmark in the 1660s and 1670s.¹⁸⁶ In the winter of 1669, he writes at length about how he tries to get the Sámi in Enare, Sodankylä, Sompio, and other *siidas* to give up their pagan customs and convert to Christianity. There are three pagan customs he mentions in particular: one is the bear festival and the Sámi’s relationship to the bear; the second is the worshiping of *sieidis*. The third, and the one that worries him most of all, however, is “that damned back door” and the events that take place there. He writes:

As regards the [ritual of] sanctifying the reindeer (possibly the sacrificial offering), then the Lapp to this end has set up a special door or hole opposite the correct door in the hut, which in Lapp is called *posion reikä*, i.e. reindeer hole... when the Lapp has felled a reindeer, he has to bring the reindeer meat not through the correct door, (holding it as a great sin), but through the damned back door, which he holds to be a holy room and worships so highly...

Tuderus tells how, determined, he set out to nail shut the back doors of the turf houses in Sompio *siida*, but that the village elder “assembled the

¹⁸⁵ Ränk 1955, 39.

¹⁸⁶ Tuderus 1773.

entire village in his hut and opposed me.”¹⁸⁷ The whole affair even came before the district assembly in Kemi, where the judge denounced the “superstitions” that occur in the *siidas*, and threatened stern punishment for “in particular opening that one door in their houses.”

The interpretation of the dwelling space as divided into a front, female (profane) part and a back, male (sacred part) has been connected with reindeer pastoralism by Mulk.¹⁸⁸ She asserts that such a partition cannot be established before 1600.¹⁸⁹ Excavated dwellings from Spildra, Sørøy, Berlevåg, Varanger, and Pasvik, however, refute Mulk on this point. Finds from these dwellings also suggest a division, with hunting weapons often connected to the back part.¹⁹⁰ In Pasvik, the finds also included a drum hammer located near the back door. Nevertheless, it could seem as if a stricter ritualization and gender division of Sámi domestic space comes into being in a late phase of the hunting economy, at the same time as the intensification of ritual manifestations that we have described above. Perhaps this can also be tied to an increased need for social control and cultural consolidation during a troubled time.¹⁹¹

4.7 CONCLUSION

In this long chapter, we have followed Sámi societies through the transitional period that the High and Late Middle Ages represented for the Sámi socially, economically, and culturally. In many ways, this time was decisive for the relationships and patterns that later came to characterize both Sámi society and the relationship between Sámi and neighboring peoples. The surrounding powers tightened their grip on the Sámi, which they would maintain for centuries to come. The livelihood of reindeer herding, that, more than any other, would characterize Sámi culture in the future was also established in parts of the Sámi area. Moreover, Christianity began in earnest to influence Sámi culture, even though in different and often indirect ways.

At the same time, social processes occurred within Sámi society that are probably unique for this period and do *not* point ahead toward later

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 26–27.

¹⁸⁸ See also Yates 1989.

¹⁸⁹ Mulk 1994, 218–220, see also Storli 1994.

¹⁹⁰ Odner 2001.

¹⁹¹ Fossum 2006.

societies. While Lillienkiöld's bold interpretation of the multi-room houses as the residences of Sámi (Finn) kings cannot be sustained, it may serve to remind us that also in the case of Sámi cultural history, every historical period is unique and not just a step on some pre-determined historical trajectory. The challenge consists of understanding Sámi society in the past from the records they themselves left behind, and not allowing oneself to be influenced by interpretations that might seem normal and reasonable from the way Sámi society later manifested.

CHAPTER FIVE

STATE INTEGRATION AND SÁMI RIGHTS CA. 1550–1750

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In this period, three main driving forces—colonization, integration into economic networks, and Christianization—still intervened in Sámi communities and, to an increasing degree, laid down the conditions for the development of society. Yet compared with the situation in the Middle Ages, more powerful institutions were established in all three sectors, which entailed definitive and incontrovertible interference in the Sámi areas. These developments considerably undermined the foundation for autonomous Sámi social systems. On the state policy level, the more indirect control represented by overlapping taxation and trade continued and developed in such a way that the surrounding states definitively subjugated the Sámi areas. The gradual colonization process that had begun in the Middle Ages culminated with states asserting the right to hegemony or sovereignty over the Sámi areas. They divided these areas among themselves—with the exception of the East Sámi *siidas* in South Varanger that remained a shared Norwegian-Russian taxation area. This process began with the intensified struggle over northern territories and seawaters from the latter half of the sixteenth century, then reached some temporary accomplishments early in the seventeenth century, and concluded with the settlement after The Great Northern War early in the eighteenth century. The more systematic activity of the states meant that new organs and institutions for central powers were established in the Sámi regions, primarily a more dense administrative apparatus and a number of new churches. The states' medieval taxation of the Sámi was reformed, developed further, and systematized. At the same time, to an increasing degree, the Sámi were subjected to secular and religious jurisdiction. In the last phase, the final Norwegian-Swedish border from Trøndelag/Jämtland to East Finnmark was finalized, which led to numerous Sámi use and settlement areas being bisected. Reindeer-herding Sámi with usage areas on both sides of the newly-drawn border had to choose national citizenship, but

were, nevertheless, assured the right to free migration through a separate supplement to the border treaty.

On an economic level, the fur trade experienced a period of prosperity in the latter half of the sixteenth century. From about 1600, however, economic activities in the Sámi areas were increasingly subjected to decrees and political intervention by the states that wanted to channel the trade to permanent markets under their control. The result was a permanent structure of institutionalized marketplaces throughout northern Fennoscandia. This process contributed to integrating the Sámi economy more firmly into existing trade networks, at the same time as access to products from the outside increased. In sum, new and alternative economic strategies opened up for the Sámi.

The political and economic integration of the Sámi regions in turn led to changes in the legal and religious spheres. From early in the seventeenth century, taxation reforms and other state efforts took on greater significance for the Sámi's internal systems regarding access to resource bases and the distribution of production surplus. This also led to changes in legal rights. While the Sámi's access to resources in their own settlement areas had largely been construed as unproblematic, their integration into the states' administrative apparatus raised the question about what rights the Sámi had in relation to the prevailing legal systems within each of the states.

Finally, towards the end of the period, a renewed, drastic offensive was launched against Sámi religion through missionary work inspired by nascent pietism on the Norwegian side and by Lutheran orthodoxy on the Swedish side. Over large parts of northern Fennoscandia, the Sámi had been subjected to Christianization campaigns from the Early Middle Ages, and some had converted to Christianity. The shamanistic form of religion that the Sámi practiced, however, seems to have been inclusive in the sense that conceptions of faith, divine figures, and rites from other religions could be borrowed and incorporated. Many Sámi, though, had developed special strategies and rites to be able to operate in several religious 'spheres,' and were thus in a position to satisfy the minimum demands set by the Catholic Church for participation in Christian rituals, at the same time as they practiced their own nature-focused religion. With the new pietistic movement in the reformed churches, however, came a stronger demand for individual, personal religious conviction, and the mission launched a campaign to get the Sámi who had 'gone astray' and practiced their own religious and shamanistic rites to confess and be

converted. At the same time, the mission displayed great energy in mapping and destroying the concrete, physical expressions of the Sámi cult such as sacrificial sites, holy places, and shamanic drums. These processes will be dealt with in more details in chapter 6.

As we have seen, the increasing integration into trade networks seems to have triggered various adaptation strategies among the Sámi, sometimes leading to increased specialization in certain resource types. Thus, increased emphasis on commercial fisheries and animal husbandry along the coast of Finnmark and North Troms can be observed, while the Sámi in the western parts of the interior focused on reindeer herding to an increasing degree. What sort of strategies the Sámi adopted seems to a large degree to have been influenced by which trade networks they were involved in. At the same time, economic changes brought about changes on the social level. In parts of the Sámi habitation area, tendencies towards weakened *siida* organization and weakened collective institutions overall can be observed. Instead, increasing importance was given to the household as the basic social and economic unit. The missionary offensive also led to serious weakening of the collective basis of identification that religious rites represented.

At the same time, we should emphasize that the processes of change did not always lead to equally negative expressions, nor have the same effects over the entire Sámi settlement area. While increased economic association with a certain trading network could lead to more direct trade contacts and unfortunate consequences in some areas, contact with several trading networks could also be utilized positively by the Sámi in other areas. The increased focus on and the more precise documentation of Sámi forms of resource usage, brought about by the process of border delineation, produced materials that could provide titles to Sámi usage rights at a later point in time. In the encounter between the states' legal systems and the Sámi adaptation forms, it is also possible that the Sámi were treated on the same level as the states' other subjects, as seems to have been the case with the Swedish tax land institution. In some cases, they could even be given special protection, as was the case with the Sámi allodial rights on the Norwegian side.

Nevertheless, the middle of the eighteenth century represents a decisive turning point in Sámi history because a number of the tendencies that were apparent in earlier eras culminated at this point in time and became more permanent and institutionalized. In the following section, we are going to take a closer look at the developments within each sector that led to this situation.

5.2 ECONOMIC AND TERRITORIAL INTEGRATION, CA. 1550–1750

5.2.1 *Trade Networks from ca. 1550 to the First Decades of the Seventeenth Century*

The trading interests that stretched from the west, south, and east into Sámi habitation areas can be understood as economic networks with ties to the expanding state powers with centers outside the Sámi areas. There was, nevertheless, no complete merger between economic areas of dominance and those areas where the states made demands on taxation and jurisdiction. In the west and north, the Sámi along the coast were attached to the Norwegian trading system based upon the exchange of goods via Bergen. In Nordland and Troms, the exchange of goods was conducted by the local ‘district vessel system,’ in which local cargo boat owners transported dried fish and other products from the local coastal communities to Bergen and brought back imported goods. In Finnmark, the contact was mediated by the Bergen merchants’ local agents who resided in the fishing stations on the outer coast.

Towards the south, the Sámi were tied to Swedish trading networks, with the center of gravity in southern Swedish towns, above all in the largest export harbor, Stockholm. Here, a number of regional towns around the Gulf of Bothnia played an important role as harbors exporting goods from northern Fennoscandia. Products both from the Sámi’s hunting and gathering activities and from the animal husbandry of the coastal population were transported south.¹ In addition, large quantities of fish were shipped out, primarily salmon and other freshwater fish from the inland areas, but also regular deliveries of fish from the Norwegian coast that were bought up from the coastal Sámi (dried fish, coalfish, skate).² At the far north, Swedish trading interests were represented by the Birkarls, who were introduced in the preceding chapter. At this time, they appear as loosely-organized corporations of merchants from agriculture-based, coastal landscapes around the Gulf of Bothnia who had specialized in trade with the Sámi. In the more southerly lappmarks, these merchants were mainly Birkarls of Swedish descent, but in the two northernmost lappmarks (Torne and Kemi) they were most often of Finnish descent.³ In sixteenth century sources on the Norwegian side, these people were

¹ Friberg 1983.

² Ibid., 199–201.

³ Hansen 1987, 219.

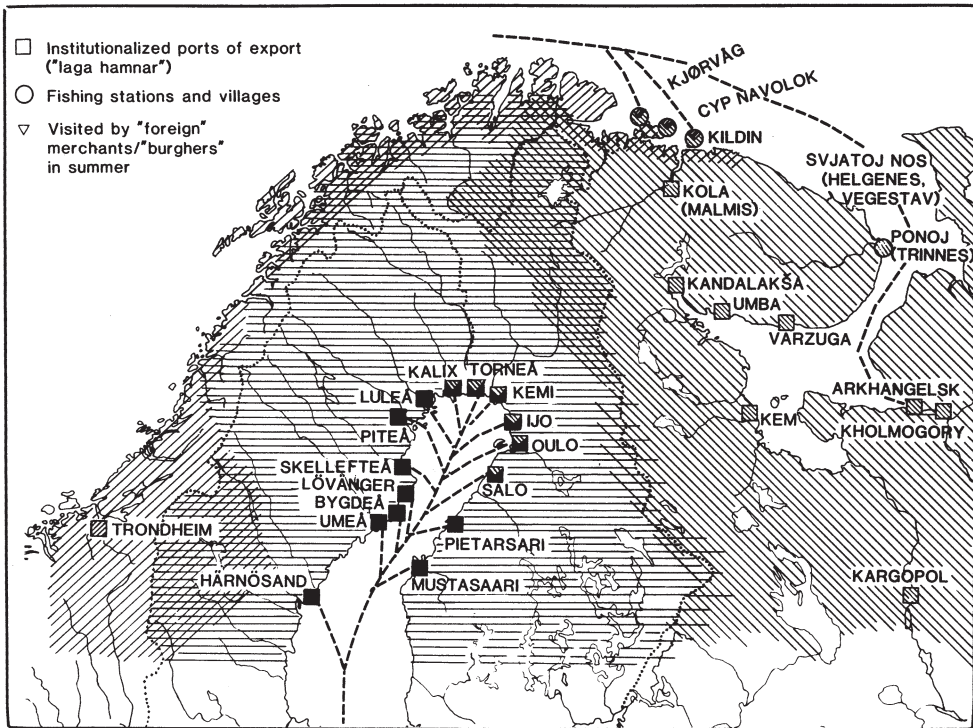


Fig. 43. The extent of the trade networks of Northern Fennoscandia AD 1550–1600.

regularly called *kvener*, that is, 'Qwain people' or 'East Kvens.' The Birkarls also extended their trading journeys to the coastal Sámi population along the Atlantic and Arctic Oceans. As early as 1498, there was a complaint on the Swedish side about Norwegian authorities making the Birkarls' travels in the coastal area difficult; thus the trading journeys over the mountains must have been in operation at least by this point in time.⁴

On the Russian side, the economic interests extending into the Sámi areas displayed a double character: on the one hand, there was a professional merchant class residing in the towns around the White Sea, such as in Kandalaksha, Kem, Suma, and Kholmogory, in the inland town Kargopol' as well as in the town of Kola. Also at the mouth of the Dvina, the town of Arkhangel'sk was founded in 1584. As in the Late Middle Ages, it seems

⁴ Fellman 1915, vol. IV, 10–12.

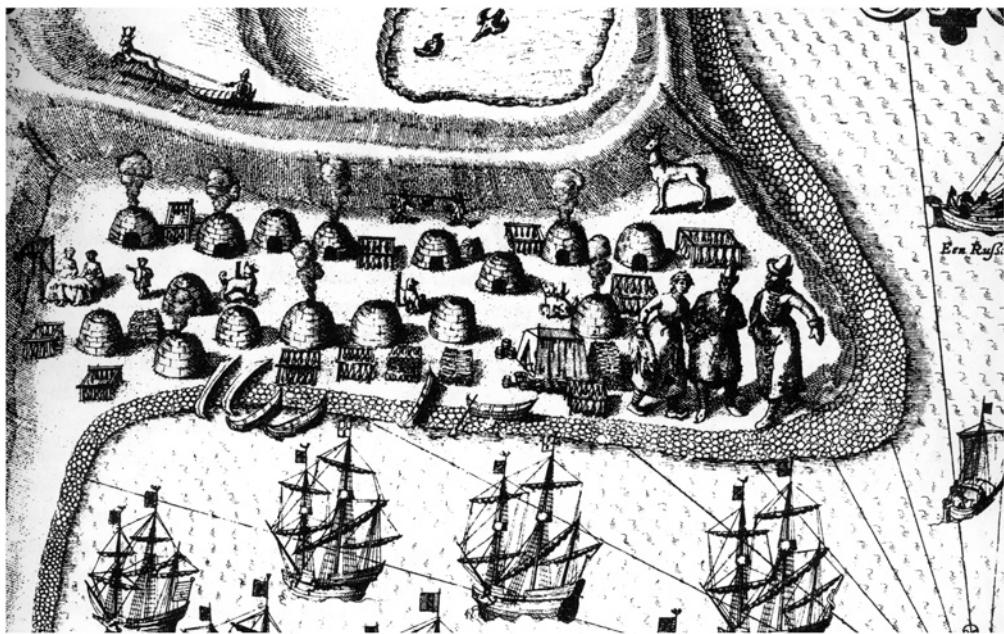


Fig. 44. Excerpt of Jan van Linschoten's map from the 1590s, with sketch of a Sámi coastal settlement at Kildin on the Kola Peninsula (from Manker 1963).

to have been Karelian and Russian merchants who, in practice, still visited the Sámi in their settlement areas. In the course of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, another type of institution came into existence in the areas south of the White Sea and on the Kola Peninsula: the Russian orthodox monasteries (see also chap. 4.5). They came to have great significance for the colonization of the East Sámi areas. In addition to their function as centers for missionary activity and religious jurisdiction, the monasteries had significant economic functions. They were engaged in various forms of production, such as fishing and salt extraction, and also traded with the Sámi in the vast hinterlands.⁵ These monasteries were built on the west coast of the White Sea, on the Solovkij islands, in the towns on the south coast of Kola (Kandalaksha, Uмба and Ponoj) as well as in Kola and Pechenga (Beahcán). With some administrative reforms in 1565, the Russian settlement areas at the mouth of the Dvina were directly subjugated to the tsar, but the districts on the south coast of Kola and along

⁵ Storå 1977; Sjaljapin 1992.

the Karelian coast in the west were excluded so that the ancient rights of the inhabitants of the Dvina from the Late Middle Ages would remain in force. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Russian authorities appear to have acted on the assumption that the western *siidas* on the Kola Peninsula had been assigned to the Pechenga monastery “instead of the farmers,” i.e., that they were regarded as belonging to the monastery in the same way as serfs were otherwise subject to noble estates in Russia. One sign that they belonged to the monastery was that they did not pay tax directly to the tsar.⁶ The Finnish researcher Väinö Tanner claimed that these Sámi were consigned to the monasteries in a semi-feudal way, in a position between that of “the tsar’s own peasants” and those who were truly serfs.⁷

On the Norwegian side, trade was arranged either by local cargo boat owners who organized the traffic between Bergen and the coastal areas of Nordland and Troms, or by permanent-resident agents for the Bergen citizens, as at the fishing stations in Finnmark.

Yet seen from a broader perspective, this was the exception rather than the norm. The majority of trade with the Sámi, from the Swedish and Russian sides, was conducted by travelling, professional merchants who themselves visited the Sámi at their winter dwelling places, both in the interior and in the fjords to the north and west. Trade contact, therefore, was primarily bilateral between the Sámi producers and the buyers. In the Sámi area, there were few real markets, i.e., regular trade meetings with attendance by several producer groups and/or merchants from several places.⁸ A central meeting place for the Sámi was the Varanger market, which seems to have had origins that date far back in time. A source from 1530 mentions a regular, recurring meeting in Varanger immediately after Christmas, where trading kvens, Russian tax collectors, and delegates from the commanding officer at Vardøhus were assumed to participate. It is therefore reasonable to assume that such markets had already been a standard occurrence for a long time, attended by various kinds of trading people and tax collectors.⁹ We know from later sources that Norwegian, Russian, and Swedish tradespeople participated in the market, side by side with Sámi from Varanger, the other fjords in East Finnmark, and the Skolt

⁶ Ušakov 1971, 55.

⁷ Tanner 1929.

⁸ Hansen 1984b, 55; Idem 1990a, 134–137.

⁹ Hansen 1984b, 61.

siidas Njávdaŋ and Báhcaveadji.¹⁰ There were also regular trade meetings in Áiddegohpi (Vajdaguba) on Poluostrov rybachiý ('Fisherman's peninsula') and on Kildin island. These meetings involved the Sámi in the adjacent *siidas* and merchants from several quarters (Russian, Norwegian, English, and Dutch), and took place in summer during the sailing season on the White Sea.¹¹ In northern Nordland and in Namdalen, there seem to have been two or three permanent trade meetings or 'markets' located in the innermost part of the fjords during the summer, but these encompassed only various producer groups (coastal and inland Sámi) and not professional merchants. These were held at Hearrgoahti (Hergotten) in Ofoten and in Grunnfjorden in Tysfjord.¹²

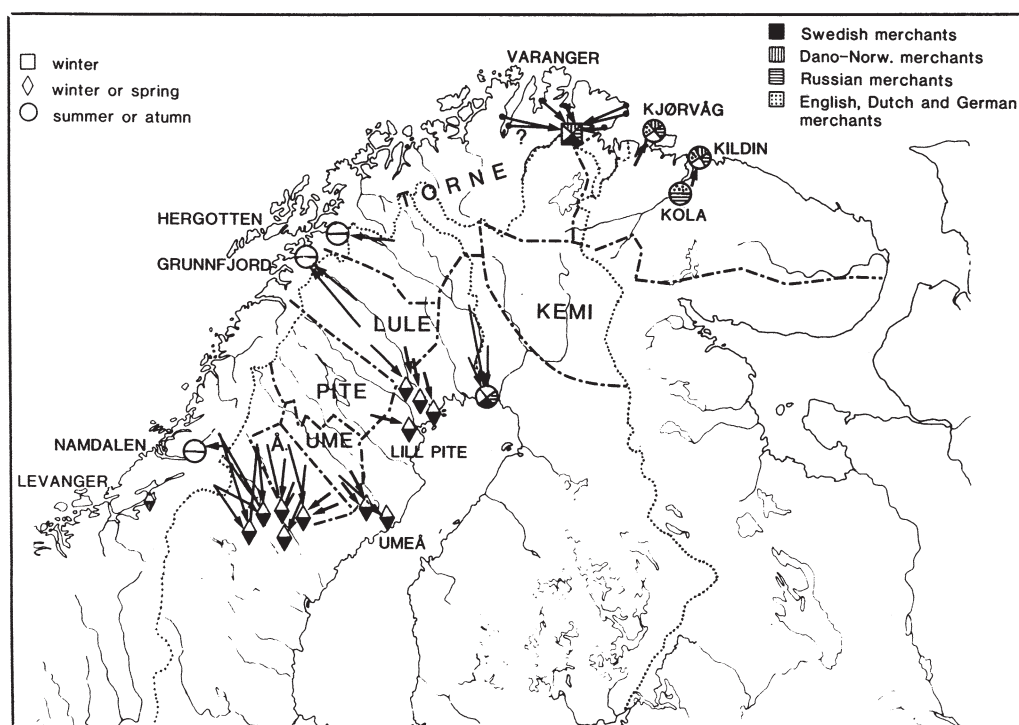


Fig. 45. Trade meetings in Northern Fennoscandia AD 1550–1600.

¹⁰ Moreover, the Báhcaveadji and Beahcán Sámi had contact with Norwegian trade at Vardø and Kiberg (Hansen 1984b, 59).

¹¹ Tanner 1929, 247–249.

¹² Hansen 1984b, 56, 72.

The incentive behind the merchants seeking trade with the Sámi was the demand for expensive furs. The fur types most often mentioned in the sources are marten, otter, wolverine, wolf, beaver, and bear, alongside squirrel, ermine (weasel pelts) and a number of types of fox pelts (mountain fox, black fox, and various kinds of red fox).¹³ In addition, there was some demand for dried fish and other fish products from the coastal Sámi. In exchange, merchants delivered supplies and commodities that the Sámi needed such as hunting and fishing equipment. From the Swedish trade network, the Birkarls came with grain and flour, bread, butter, salt, as well as a whole series of iron objects that reflected highly-developed Swedish iron production at this time: axes, hammers, knives, fishing sinkers, fox traps, and scythes.¹⁴ In addition, the Birkarls brought silver as a means of exchange for the fur sales. The Russian and the Karelian merchants, for their part, offered 'Russian hides' and tanned leather, hemp, linen, cotton, tallow, wax, and soap, in addition to supplies like bread, barley, and flour. Through trade on the Norwegian side, the Sámi were supplied with grain and rye flour, cash money, silver, copper objects, and a whole series of textiles, mainly woven wool materials from central European production areas in the Netherlands and Germany.¹⁵

5.2.2 *Different Trade Profiles among the Sámi*

Depending on their geographic localization, separate Sámi local communities were integrated into the different trade networks to varying degrees. While the easternmost Finnmark fjords could regularly cultivate contacts with buyers and tradesmen from all three of the trade networks, the Sámi in western Finnmark and North Troms enjoyed contacts with only two of the groups: the Swedish through the Birkarls' regular visits, and the Norwegian group along the coast. From South Troms and southwards, the coastal Sámi appear to have been limited unilaterally to Norwegian trade, with sporadic visits from the Birkarls. In the interior, both Swedish and Russian/Karelian merchants operated in the northernmost parts of Torne and Kemi lappmark, while the remaining inland Sámi were more dependent on the Swedish trade network.¹⁶ Separate studies have established that this also involved a clear differentiation with regard to trade profile: in analyzing what kind of goods the Sámi used to pay the tax to the

¹³ Hansen 1990a.

¹⁴ Steckzén 1964, 344.

¹⁵ Hansen 1990a, 202; 1995, 24, 28.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 143–156, 223.

Swedish crown, it appears that the coastal Sámi from Ofoten to Varanger generally paid between three-quarters and the full value of the tax with imported goods. These goods consisted of money, silver, and woolen textiles, which they had received from tradesmen on the Norwegian side. In contrast, the inland Sámi in Torne lappmark paid far less than half of their tax with such imported goods, on average from thirteen to forty percent. They paid a much greater share with their own produced wares, primarily furs.¹⁷ This difference probably reflects to a large degree the Sámi's will and ability to utilize the differentiated demand offered by the various trade structures, and to a lesser degree, real regional differences with regard to resources. In fact, the coastal Sámi sold their foremost product, dried fish, to the Norwegian tradesmen who were offering the best price and thereafter used some of the goods they received from this transaction to pay the Swedish tax. In this way, they exploited price differences between the trade networks for their own ends. In a similar way, it seems that fox and otter furs from the coastal areas, together with copper objects that had originally been delivered through Norwegian trade, ended up with the merchants from the Russian side, because these goods were especially in demand within the Russian trade apparatus and attained the highest prices there.¹⁸

From the Swedish side, the fur trade during this period of time was run both by the Birkarls under private management and by the representatives of the Swedish crown, the Lapp bailiffs. As early as during Gustav I's (Vasa) reign (1530s and 1540s), the Swedish monarch had sought to keep competing merchants (primarily Russians and Karelians) out of trade in the lappmarks.¹⁹ In 1553, a separate 'royal fur chamber' was also established at the royal castle in Stockholm, which was supposed to be in charge of further export to the European markets.²⁰ These initiatives had a limited effect, however. From the Sámi *siidas* in the interior, significant quantities of furs still went eastward, and, at the same time, significant intermediate trade was apparently going on between the Birkarls and the merchants from the east. In 1555, Swedish authorities confiscated an extensive Russian fur stock right outside Tornio which, among other things, included 555 reindeer pelts, 1816 red fox pelts, 87 beaver pelts, 464 otter pelts, and 2058 pieces of squirrel. How sizeable this consignment

¹⁷ Ibid., 188.

¹⁸ Ibid., 204–212.

¹⁹ Friberg 1967; Olofsson 1962.

²⁰ Steckzén 1964, 322.

was can clearly be seen when compared with the quantities of furs that were received by the royal fur chamber the same year. Of corresponding furs, the fur office received from the whole of Norrbotten only 174 red fox, fifty-four beaver, and fifteen otter pelts; the only significant quantity was in the form of less valuable squirrel pelts, 7,735 total.²¹ Based on that period's conversion rate, the Russian fur stock would have been worth five to six times as much as the tax that the Swedish crown was demanding at this time from the Sámi in Torne lappmark and along the Norwegian coast.²² The importance the Swedish crown's tax collectors put on the buying of furs is clearly demonstrated by the fact that they used imported goods collected as tax payments among the coastal Sámi in order to buy furs from the Sámi of the interior. Large portions of the silver and the textiles that the coastal Sámi had paid in taxes thereby ended up with the inland Sámi as payment for fox furs, beaver furs, ermine, and squirrel.²³ Through these overlapping networks of trade and taxation, greater circulation was established in which Dutch and German textiles (such as *nersk* from Naarden, *bemesk* from Bohemia and *görlesk* from the east German town Görlitz), which had originally been imported via Bergen and transported northwards along the coast, ended up as tent cloths and furnishings at Sámi dwelling places in the interior of northern Fennoscandia.

The fur export via the fur chamber in Stockholm increased from the middle of the century and reached a peak in the 1570s. At this time, the Swedish crown also claimed the explicit right to purchase furs and demanded that fur goods must first be offered to the king's bailiffs before they could be sold to others. In the peak year of 1574, 3384 beaver pelts, 3586 fox pelts, and 5372 otter pelts are supposed to have been exported from Stockholm.²⁴ At the same time, significant quantities of fur goods also went east, likely shipped out via the White Sea ports.

5.2.3 *State Regulation from ca. 1600*

Closer state regulation of trade in the Sámi areas did not occur until the years immediately after 1600, and then, as a result of the more exhaustive investigations of taxation, jurisdiction, and trade in the Sámi areas that each of the states implemented. The context involved intensified

²¹ Ibid., 356, 359.

²² Hansen 1990a, 139.

²³ Ibid., 194–203; Idem, 1995, 35.

²⁴ Steckzén 1964, 357.

competition for population and resources in northern Fennoscandia, which had started in the last decades of the sixteenth century. Regarding trade in particular, the goal was to limit the activity to fixed times and places where it could easily be controlled by state representatives; at the same time, other measures such as tax collection could be conducted more efficiently. On the Swedish side, these measures arose as a consequence of what has been called a 'state household policy,' which can be traced back to Gustav I in the first half of the sixteenth century. The aim of this policy was to channel resources into the central state apparatus. When at the end of the century Karl IX began a new offensive along the same lines, one of the main objectives was to curtail the trade of the Birkarls. Supply and purchaser channels other than those officially sanctioned by the crown either had to be stopped or subjected to such strong restrictions that they would no longer pose any real threat. In order to accomplish this, permanent markets were to be established in the lappmarks, at special places where churches would be built and justice administered as well. By a decree in 1602, it was decided that henceforth, trade on the Swedish side was to occur twice a year, at a selected place within each of the administrative districts called a *lappmark*. The crown's bailiffs would undertake inspection and arrange for booths to be built there. Inland Sámi, Birkarls, as well as Russian merchants and others who wished to engage in trade with the Sámi must be directed to attend these markets.²⁵ Three years later, the centralization policy was followed up by a new, general decree on tax collection, trade, markets, and church-building in the lappmarks. These decrees would also have consequences for the Sámi's individual right of disposition over hunting and grazing areas within the *siida* (see chap. 5.3). On the advice of the local bailiffs, one of the Sámi's traditional winter dwelling places within each lappmark was selected to be a market and church location by building booths and a church. Trade would take place over a two to three week period, for fixed terms. The Sámi were ordered to construct the buildings, and henceforth there would be an end to the merchants' free traveling, despite the Birkarls' protests, invoking the privileges they had received in Gustav I's time. At the same time, a new fee on the Birkarls' trade was introduced, the so-called Birkarlian tithe.²⁶ How successful Karl IX's measures actually were is shown by the fact that these selected market and church places, with few exceptions, came to

²⁵ Fellman vol. IV, 1915, 92.

²⁶ Fellman vol. IV, 1915, 118; Idem, 1987, 233; Idem, 1990a, 250–254.

function as such through the following centuries, and that a majority of them still today function as significant town centers (see fig. 46).

On the Danish-Norwegian side, there was less concern with establishing permanent markets at this point in time, but in the first decades of the seventeenth century, a number of prohibitions were issued against the Birkarls or 'the Kvens' coming over to the coastland for trading purposes. The prohibition was also valid for the inland Sámi, who in their nomadic migrations to the coast often brought along goods to sell, both of their own production and merchants' wares. When the Swedish government, at the beginning of the 1620s, granted privileges to a number of the towns around the Gulf of Bothnia, there was a sharp reaction from the Danish-Norwegian side, and the prohibition was repeated in 1629.²⁷ These prohibitions, though, do not seem to have had any special effect

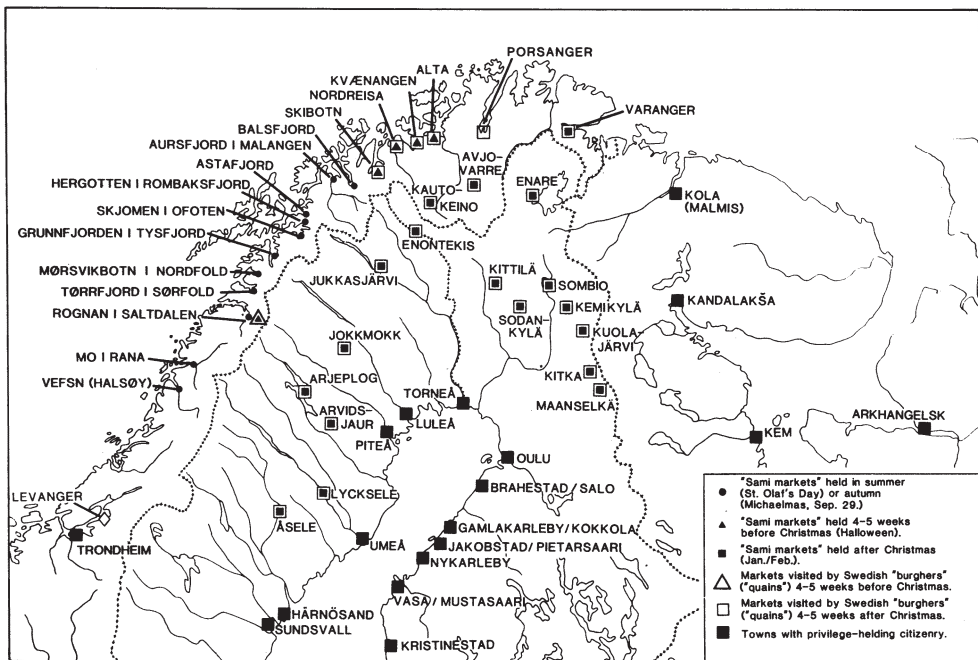


Fig. 46. Institutionalized "Lapp markets" and "burgher markets" of Northern Fennoscandia around 1750.

²⁷ Hansen 1987, 234.

before the middle of the seventeenth century. Following a short war between the kingdoms in 1643–1645, the peace treaty concluded in Brömsebro asserted explicitly that all trade by Swedish merchants over the border to Denmark-Norway was to be prohibited.²⁸

However, just a few years later in 1653, the sources mention that special markets were to be established for such trade on the Danish-Norwegian side as well.²⁹ The absolute prohibition enunciated in the 1645 peace agreement was evidently about to be rescinded. It was now presented as if such markets had existed in northern Norway ‘from time immemorial’ and that the Swedes’ trade would still be allowed at these markets. Thus, the legal situation on both sides after 1653 was such that the Swedish merchants’ trade with the Sámi and the other local population was allowed in connection with special markets that were fixed and approved by royal order: in the interior in the name of the Swedish king and in the coastal regions in the name of the Danish-Norwegian king. In practice, this meant a restriction of the Birkarls’ relatively free travel in the coastal regions, even though earlier, a few Norwegian bailiffs had sought to prevent this. In some of the coastal Sámi communities, it appears that this curtailment of contact with the Swedish trade network may have had negative consequences. For example, the Varanger Sámi experienced a temporary economic crisis in the first half of the seventeenth century, although in this case it is difficult to say what significance the reduction in trade contact might have had compared to other forms of pressure that the Sámi experienced, such as increased taxation, supply difficulties within the Norwegian trade via Bergen, and intensified resource competition with the Norwegian population in the area.

In some Danish-Norwegian sources from around 1600, it is claimed that the Birkarls’ taxation of the Sámi had its origin in voluntary contributions connected to the exchange of goods. At the outset, some Sámi had allegedly given the Kvens or the East Finns a “gift of friendship or present” so “they would not do them any violence, when [they] annually visited them with their trade.”³⁰ In 1551, however, the Swedish king Gustav I had subjugated the Birkarls under the crown, and changed this gift to a regular tax. It is true that this assertion was recorded as a result

²⁸ Hansen 1987; 1990a, 259.

²⁹ Qvigstad and Wiklund Vol. II, 1909, 293–295; see also *Norske Rigs-registranter*, vol. X, 555–557; vol. XI, 78.

³⁰ *Norske Rigs-registranter*, vol. III, 543.

of the investigations that Christian IV started in order to map taxation and border conditions in the north, thus the account might be biased. On the other hand, we have seen in chapter 3, the Sámi word *skean̄ka* (gift) was probably borrowed from Scandinavian in connection with exchange-gift relations. Therefore, it may well be that in the beginning, the Sámi considered their relationship with the Birkarls on the same level as their earlier relationship to the Norwegian population, and wanted to affirm this through ritual gift exchange.

5.2.4 *Market Trading in the First Half of the Eighteenth Century*

Through the first half of the eighteenth century, permanent, institutionalized markets were established in the north that were the most important connecting link for interregional trade. The free, visiting activity of merchants from the Swedish side both along the coast and in the interior, which had been so characteristic for the period 1550–1600, now largely came to an end. Alongside increased regulations, introduced by the state policy of that time in accordance with a mercantile ideology, the following factors influenced trade contacts in Northern Fennoscandia:

Continued development and further spread of reindeer nomadism: Nomadic reindeer herding was taken up in ever increasing parts of the Sámi settlement area, further north and east than before. Large-scale reindeer herding, though, did not take hold in Kemi lappmark and on the Kola Peninsula. In those areas in which reindeer herding had been established, however, the herd size of some Sámi increased at the same time, with subsequent polarization between large and small reindeer owners.

Expanding agricultural settlement and transition to agrarian forms of adaptation: The river valleys of the interior experienced immigration of Swedish and Finnish farmers, at the same time as an increasing number of Sámi took up farming in the same areas and became permanently settled. In Kemi lappmark, slash-and-burn Finnish settlers led the way in agricultural colonization. By the middle of the eighteenth century, the Maanselkä and Kitka *siidas* had been almost completely taken over by farmers.

Increasing immigration to the fjords in Finnmark and North Troms by Norwegians and Finlanders (Kvens): The result was intensified competition for resources, which the Sámi in part supplanted from outer fjord districts.

Establishment of pits and mines (silver, copper, and ironworks) in the Sámi area on the Swedish side (Torne, Lule and Pite lappmarks).

These factors not only caused traditional Sámi activities such as hunting and trapping to come under pressure because of encroachment into the areas, but also these new livelihoods in certain areas introduced possibilities for earning wages and the increased importance of a monetary economy. These new livelihoods also led to an increased production surplus that could be set aside. The specialized, reindeer-herding Sámi could offer a greater surplus of reindeer products, mainly meat, but also hides, reindeer cheese, and manufactured products such as fur coats and reindeer jackets. After some time, the new groups of farmers could also offer a surplus of cattle products. In the following, we will present some fundamental features of the market trade as it developed in the first half of the eighteenth century, with an eye to institutional development, the actual content of the exchange of goods, and the relationships between the trading partners, with particular focus on the Sámi.

In the interior and in the coastal area from Varanger to Skibotn in Lyngen, the markets took place during the winter, either shortly before or shortly after Christmas. Yet, in the coastal area further south and west, from Balsfjord in Troms to Vefsn, the markets took place during the summer and in part during the autumn. In the north and at the inland *siidas*, the old pattern of the Birkarls' trading journeys was clearly continued, but in new forms—not least influenced by the regulations introduced by Karl IX. From South Troms and southward, on the other hand, the pattern known from Nordland was institutionalized, with trade meetings at the innermost parts of the fjords during the summer. In addition, the Levanger market by the Trondheim fjord, which was held in the spring, became very important for a number of the Jämtland Sámi, at least indirectly. As recently as the 1680s, extensive trade in Sámi products is documented here, likely with Jämtland farmers as intermediaries.³¹

³¹ Hallan 1966; Salvesen 1979, 46.

The regulations and the stricter control by governmental authorities, however, led to a number of changes concerning the actors who were involved, and the routes taken by the flow of goods. Generally, there were four different patterns:

1. In the western Sámi areas on the Swedish side, the exchange of goods seems to have become more unilateral, in spite of the fact that trading activity was pulled into the lappmarks to the permanent market spaces. Trade there had the character of a purely bilateral meeting between resident Sámi producers and buyers from the Swedish trade network, without any element of competing trade interests. What the Sámi offered for sale was probably characterized more by products from reindeer herding than before, such as reindeer hides, prepared furs, fur coats, reindeer jackets, moccasins, and reindeer boots, as well as some lake fish.

2. In Kemi lappmark, on the other hand, there were still a number of Russian tradesmen who appeared at the fixed market terms, and so the Sámi had alternative merchants with whom they could trade. An essential factor that contributed to regularizing the permanent markets in the interior was the fact that the Swedish government's representatives also appeared there, held court assemblies, and carried out the administration of justice. At the same time, it was a church holiday with religious functions, such as holding weddings and baptisms.

The Varanger market was also visited by several competing merchant groups: Swedish, Russian and Norwegian traders as well as Sámi from the neighboring fjords in addition to the local Sámi and Norwegian fishermen. Both regarding the participating trade partners and the contents of the exchange of goods, there seems to have been a great degree of continuity in East Finnmark. Moreover, it is during this time period that, for the first time, we get clear information about the location and date of this market, which had received royal approval in a decree from 1688. The bailiff Niels Knag, in his description of Finnmark from 1694, provides an instructive depiction of the market:

...and is held there an annual market in accordance with the order of his Royal Highness, from 11 August 1688; the same market takes place the 23 January, to which merchants and farmers come from Vadsø, Kiberg, and Vardø districts, together with the authorities, and then the bailiff returns from Malmis (Kola), and there assemblies and court meetings are held, albeit in a turf hut that is called the King's turf hut; the Sámi from Varanger come there too, and some of the Sámi from Tana and Laksefjord, and the

Swedish border Sámi from the village of Arritzbye (Ohcejohka), and other villages (*siidas*), Russian Sámi from Neiden and Pasvig, Russians from Kola town, which is Malmis, as well as a considerable number of merchants from the town of Torne in Sweden, together with some hundred reindeer, with which they are driving and carrying their merchandise to and fro.³²

3. Intermediation between different trade interests was also a striking feature of the markets now regularly held in the area from Alta to Skibotn. Here, a double structure was developed, which had two fixed markets during wintertime: a Lapp market four to five weeks before Christmas, and a burgher or Kven market four to five weeks after Christmas. The first kind of market was conditioned by the further development of reindeer nomadism and the emergence of the familiar migration pattern between inland and coast, which seems to have been established at the end of the seventeenth century and the beginning of the eighteenth century.³³ Because of this specialization, the reindeer-herding Sámi had a larger amount of slaughtered meat and other reindeer products to offer. At the same time, they were interested in exchanging products with the coastal population and in utilizing some of the resources in the coastal region. From this time, we know that the nomads acquired fish both by exchange and by engaging in fishing on their own account in some of the fjords. Some of this fish was later sold at the markets in the interior. For example, fish from Kvaenangen was sold at the market in Guovdageaidnu.³⁴ As a result, relations between the reindeer-herding nomads and the local coastal Sámi were developed. In this period, we probably find the first signs of the *verdde* institution—a kind of reciprocal, hospitality relationship between partners for mutual benefit—between the reindeer nomads and the coastal Sámi. Through this hospitality, a symbiotic relationship developed between the reindeer-herding Sámi and the resident coastal Sámi. Especially in connection with the spring migrations to the islands, the coastal Sámi helped with lodging, boats, and equipment, and in return were paid in the form of meat and pelts in the fall. The coastal Sámi could also have their own reindeer, which travelled with the herds of the nomads and were cared

³² Knag 1694, *Nordnorske samlinger* 1:22 (authors' translation).

³³ Adelaer census 1690; NNS I, 296–298; von Westen 1717; NNS 1, 105–109.

³⁴ Schnitler vol. 2, 1929, 379.

for and guarded by the reindeer-herding Sámi, called custodial reindeer (*sytingsrein* in Norwegian).³⁵

As for the 'burghers,' the conditions for their activity must partly be sought in the regulation of the interior market trade that Karl IX had started, which made it convenient for burghers to visit markets along the coast once they had traveled into the interior, and partly in the fact that Tornio had been granted town privileges in the 1620s. Merchants from the Swedish side now became known as 'Tornio burghers.' They seem to have brought a similar selection of goods as before: butter, hemp, and various textiles, alongside a wide assortment of ironware and other metal wares: iron kettles, axes, guns, needles, and various copper and bronze objects. One of the main reasons that the Tornio burghers visited the coastal region seems to have been the purchase of fish and fish products, like dried cod and pollack, halibut, and salted salmon. Judging by Danish-Norwegian complaints from the end of the seventeenth century, the demand for furs continued to play a certain role, although it might just as well be that these complaints reflect an increasing interest for furs and pelts from the Norwegian side. From the middle of the seventeenth century, we find decrees that the Sámi had to offer such wares to the Norwegian traders or the king's officials, before they possibly contacted Russian or Kven merchants.³⁶ At the court assembly in Varanger, it was stressed that no trade should take place with the Swedish or Russian merchants before their arrival had been reported to the county governor by the Sámi sheriff. Throughout the eighteenth century, the burgher markets in west Finnmark and North Troms were also increasingly visited by farmers from the inland river valleys who offered their products for sale.

4. On the coastal stretch between Balsfjord and Vefsn, there was, however, a restriction of trading contacts compared to the classical 'Birkarlian period' at the end of the sixteenth century. In this case, the flow of goods seems to have gone in the opposite direction. The bilateral contact that the merchants from the Swedish side had previously represented was severed. Yet the nomads moved in ever wider areas and more regularly, visiting the markets at the innermost parts of the fjords. According to Samuel Rheen, there were several places where markets were held bi-annually: one on Midsummer's

³⁵ Eidheim 1971; Evjen 2007, 79–93.

³⁶ Hansen 1984b, 237, especially note 45.

Day and one on All Saints' Day.³⁷ The reason for this is supposed to have been that the nomads had a different selection of items to offer in the summer and in the autumn, after the slaughter. Here too, exchange relations between the nomads and the local population were expanded and deepened. From the coastal population, the reindeer-herding Sámi now acquired dried fish, herring, train oil, cow and goat meat, woven blankets (*ránut*) and other types of coarse textiles such as homespun. Moreover, it appears that the reindeer-herding Sámi became more strongly attached to professional trade on the Norwegian side. The markets at the innermost parts of the fjords were also visited by cargo vessel skippers and others who were engaged in the Bergen trade, and from these traders the nomads began to purchase grain wares, butter, hemp, and some textiles, as well as brandy. From the Norwegians, they bought salt, certain types of textiles, as well as gunpowder and lead. These were goods that the inland Sámi had previously acquired from the Swedish trade network. In addition, one can observe that the nomads took over some of the trade previously conducted by the Birkarls, although on a smaller scale. This was especially the case for the trade in ironware. While Swedish merchants still brought a whole series of smaller iron objects and tools to Finnmark and northern Troms, such goods were now transported by pack-saddle and sled on the strings of reindeer by the nomads to southern Troms and northern Nordland. The nomads bought up these objects on the Swedish side and transported them over to the coastal region during their migrations.³⁸ These actions can be considered as a continuation and expansion of the intermediation trade that the inland Sámi had carried on earlier, but which then concentrated on particular types of furs. However, it must be emphasized that the nomads did not have sufficient transport capacity at their disposal to engage in such trade on a scale comparable to that of the Birkarls in their heyday, with a corresponding selection of goods. Taken together, therefore, the changes in trade that had taken place from South Troms and farther south must have made the coastal population more unilaterally dependent on supplies from the trade network in southern Norway, primarily the Bergen trade, as well as on the alternative channel that the Trondheim burghers partly constituted.

³⁷ Rheen, 1897.

³⁸ Hansen 1990a, 267.

5.2.5 *Sámi Responses to Trade and Economic Policy*

As we have seen, the last half of the sixteenth century was characterized by prosperity in the fur trade. Throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, trade was regulated to a greater degree by legal decrees and agreements, and to an increasing extent it was channeled into permanent markets. In sum, these changes contributed to integrating the Sámi economy much more strongly into existing trade networks and gave them greater access to outside products. This also enabled the development of other social and economic strategies, but to what extent and in what way they were accomplished depends to a large degree on which network of contacts was involved.

As explored in chapter 4, scholars have traditionally attached great importance to the excessive demand for furs in explaining the changes that took place at this time in the Sámi communities. It has been assumed that intensified trade contacts and demand stimulated a one-sided emphasis on hunting and trapping for furs, which, over time, led to the decimation both of the animals hunted and of wild reindeer stocks.³⁹ Others have given more emphasis to changes in internal social structure that might have been brought about by intensified contacts with external trading partners, since such contacts could allow for a stronger individual rewarding of capable hunters, and thereby undermine more egalitarian forms of organization.⁴⁰

The effects of trade contacts have also been interpreted in a more nuanced way, which highlights the fact that we cannot always assume that trade contact had negative consequences for the ways in which the Sámi adapted their manner of hunting. While under certain circumstances, trade must be seen as introducing pressure on established livelihoods, it can also be viewed as a compensatory mechanism that the Sámi might resort to and mobilize, in order to compensate for the effects of other pressure factors, such as increased taxation, population growth, colonization by neighboring peoples, and stronger administrative interference on the part of state authorities. In particular, it has been pointed out that, from a Sámi perspective, it must have been more beneficial to have access to several, alternative trading partners so that they could benefit from various patterns of demand and existing price differences, rather than be limited to one trade apparatus in which professional merchants primarily

³⁹ Tegengren 1952, 56; Vorren 1978a, 152; 1980, 251.

⁴⁰ Olsen 1987.

set the conditions. This line of argument is strengthened by the fact that traditional collective methods of hunting and trapping were maintained for the longest period in the East Sámi areas, where the Sámi enjoyed the benefit of trade contact with all three trade networks and, at the same time, could pursue internal, intermediate trade. Conversely, the development of reindeer nomadism first took hold in the western lappmarks on the Swedish side, where the Sámi were unilaterally limited to the Swedish trading network.⁴¹

In the East Sámi areas and in Kemi lappmark, trade and its regulatory initiatives implemented from the seventeenth century on also seem to have resulted in a strengthening of the *siida* as a collective institution. In particular, winter villages became more important as arenas for trade and tax collecting, and this contributed to strengthening the villages' role for the *siida*'s social reproduction as well. Archaeological examinations of winter villages along Nukkumajoki at Inari indicate a more fixed organization in addition to more permanent houses and construction from the last half of the sixteenth century or the beginning of the seventeenth century.⁴² In the northern coastal Sámi areas, however, tendencies are observed which point in the direction of increased disintegration. As mentioned in the previous chapter, in the sixteenth century there still appear to be instances of collective Sámi institutions both on the coast of northern Troms and in Varanger.⁴³ In Kvaenangen, the distribution of round turf hut sites, together with features in the sixteenth-century tax rolls, suggest the existence of three distinct social units in the fjord, focused around Spildra, Straumen, and Burfjord. Later, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, this *siida*-based structure fragmented. The common dwelling places with clusters of round turf huts were replaced by family sites containing singular, rectangular turf huts⁴⁴ scattered around the fjord, corresponding to the later farm settlement.⁴⁵ At the same time, archaeological evidence implies increased emphasis on domestic animal raising, including cattle.

In the period dealt with in this chapter, the general emphasis among the Sámi on hunting as the main subsistence activity seems to have been disrupted, leading to a differentiation in livelihoods, even though this

⁴¹ Hansen 1990a, 427–428, 434; Hansen 1995, 326–329.

⁴² Carpelan and Kankainen 1990; Carpelan and Lavento 1996; Carpelan et al. 1996, 16–18; Carpelan 2001, 293; cf. Itkonen 1931, 7.

⁴³ Grydeland 1996; Odner 1992, 2001.

⁴⁴ These were called common houses (*sjekk kapitittel*).

⁴⁵ Grydeland 1996, 52–59.

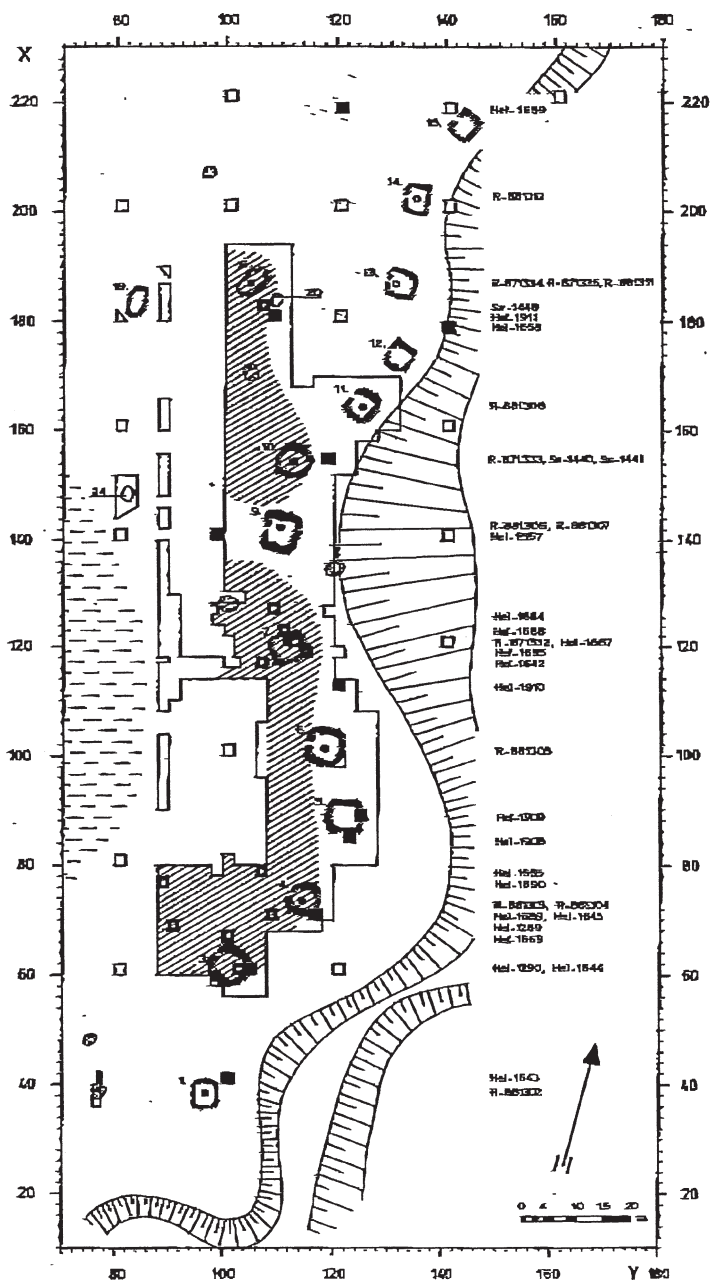


Fig. 47. Site map of the winter village Nukkumajoki 2 at Enare (from Carpelan, Jungner & Mejdahl 1996).

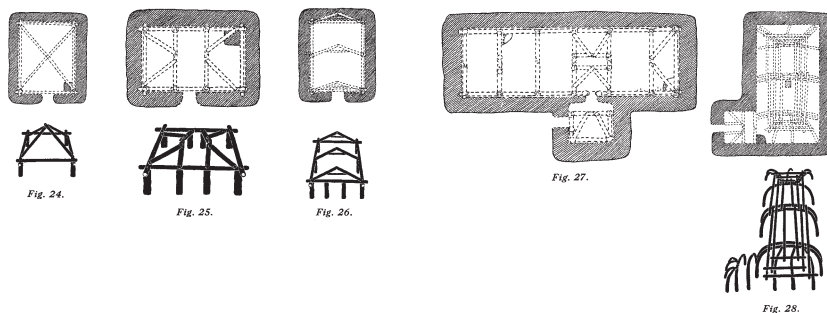


Fig. 48. Floor plans of rectangular turf huts, inter alia “common houses”, from Laksefjord (from Falkenberg 1941).



Fig. 49. Remains of a “common house” in Knarvik, Måsøy municipality. (Photo: Bjørnar Olsen).

applied to the East Sámi areas to a much lesser degree. In the coastal areas, these changes were most strongly expressed through increased emphasis on animal husbandry and commercial fishing. However, it should be noted that reindeer herders, to a significant degree, were also recruited from coastal Sámi areas like Varanger (see chap. 4). In the years around 1700, the probate records from the easternmost Finnmark fjords document a growth in the keeping of domesticated reindeer among individual groups along the coast.⁴⁶ At the same time, the court assize minutes (the justice protocols) from the 1690s on reveal an increasing number of conflicts between inland and coastal *siidas* in this region, resulting from the fact that the reindeer owners from both communities had embarked upon longer migrations and hence had broken with established *siida* borders for hunting, trapping, and grazing areas. Gradually, these parallel migrations of coastal and inland reindeer-herding units merged and formed the basis for the familiar pattern of migration between winter pasture in the interior and summer pasture along the outer coast.⁴⁷

In the coastal Sámi areas where farming and participation in commercial fisheries gained a foothold, distinct changes in the settlement picture occurred. The round turf huts were supplemented or replaced by larger rectangular turf huts, as mentioned above. These 'common houses' were, in fact, a product of the introduction of animal husbandry, in that one end of the turf hut was reserved for domestic animals and the other for people. Archaeological excavations indicate that this dwelling form begins to appear in the coastal Sámi areas in the sixteenth century, or slightly earlier. At the same time, a transition to fewer and shorter seasonal migrations occurred and more sedentary modes of habitation were gaining ground in the coastal Sámi area.

There is also documentation of corresponding processes of economic and social change, albeit somewhat later, in Varanger. Here, too, domestic animal raising (including cattle) seems to have made a breakthrough from the sixteenth century.⁴⁸ Throughout the seventeenth century, the settlement pattern underwent changes. The Sámi stayed together less at the old winter dwelling places in the inner part of the fjord and gradually began to use permanent dwelling places where they stayed both summer and winter.⁴⁹ From the end of the seventeenth century, the written sources

⁴⁶ Nielssen 1986.

⁴⁷ Hansen, introduction to Schnitler, vol. III, 1985; Pedersen 1994, 52–63.

⁴⁸ Odner 1992; 2001, 29.

⁴⁹ Kristensen 2001, 47.

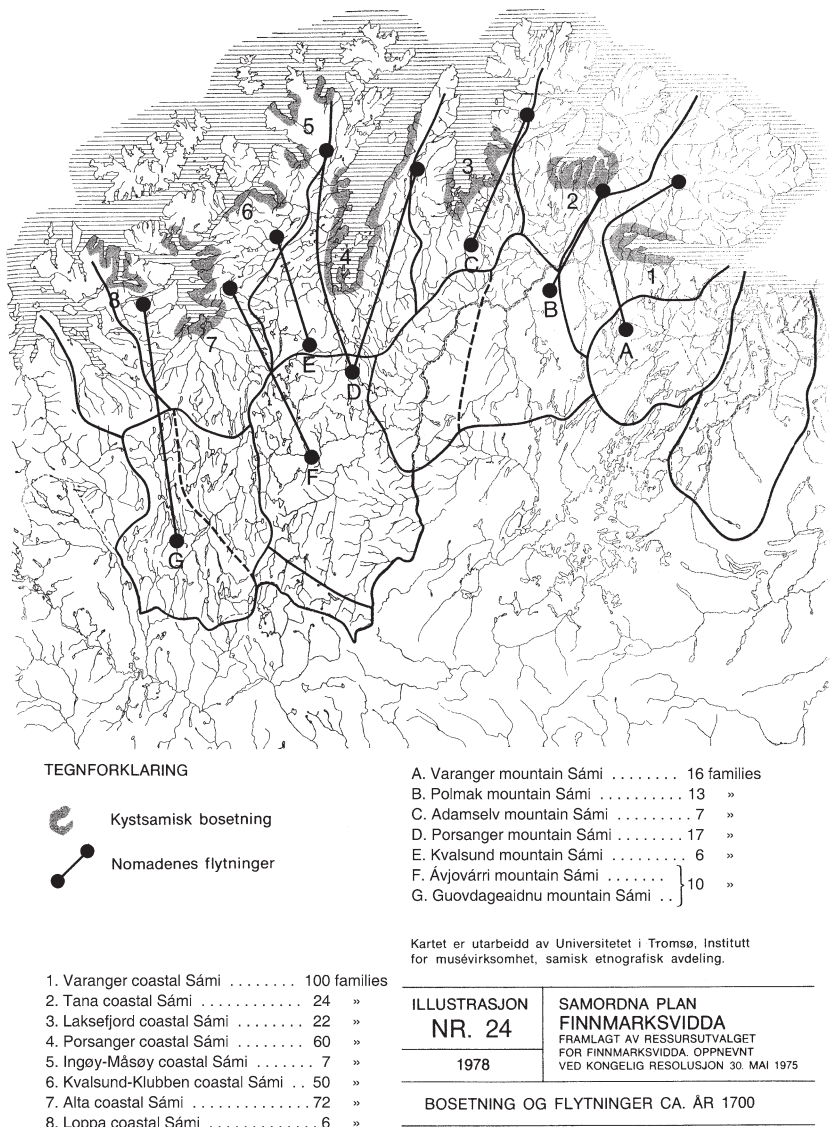


Fig. 50. From the end of the seventeenth century a nomadic migration pattern came into existence in Finnmark, as a result of the merging of reindeer herding groups from the coast and from the interior. The map is based on information from Thomas von Westen early in the eighteenth century (from Vorren 1978).

report a long series of winter dwelling places.⁵⁰ While the core area for the Varanger Sámi around 1700 was still the inner part of the fjord, throughout the eighteenth century there was a certain transition to permanent, year-round settlements. At the same time, distance migration disintegrated and was replaced in part by short distance migration.⁵¹ Moreover, at the end of the 1600s, a new settlement arose west of the Tana river (the so-called upper Tana Finns) through immigration of Sámi from the lower Tana, Varanger, and Ohcejohka.⁵² This, in time, led to conflicts with the Varanger Sámi's established patterns of usage.

All of these changes indicate a weakened *siida* institution and an increased importance of the household as the primary social and economic unit.⁵³ That the authorities did not necessarily find such 'privatization' and disintegration of the *siida* collective advantageous for their own desires in trade and tax collecting is evident from the following order from the county governor, Hans Lilienskiöld, announced at the district court assembly in Varanger in the autumn of 1688:

Inasmuch as the Varanger Sámi are resident at widely-separated places, such as Rafftesiden, Sandhofuerne and way up in the settled area, so that they cannot easily be assembled, or the migrations take place without disorder, that is caused thereby, *hence it is ordered that all of the Varanger Sámi shall move together to live in one village at one place such as it has been usual from old time*, and that under appropriate [threat of] penalty.⁵⁴

These processes, of course, cannot be connected unilaterally with changed economic conditions. The differences between the Christian churches (Russian Orthodox in the east and Lutheran from Varanger westwards), which engaged in vigorous missionary activity towards the Sámi in north-eastern Fennoscandia from the last half of the sixteenth century, may very well have played a part.⁵⁵ The greater emphasis on tradition and collective institutions in the Russian Church, together with greater flexibility vis-à-vis Sámi ritual practice, probably contributed to preventing or delaying such processes of social disintegration that were then taking place within the western Sámi areas.

⁵⁰ Harøe 1683, in *Nordnorske samlinger*, vol. I, 1938, 66–77; Niemi 1983; cf. Hansen 1990a, 407.

⁵¹ Kristensen 2001, 48.

⁵² Hansen 1985.

⁵³ See also Odner 1992.

⁵⁴ Finnmark chief magistrate's office, justice prot. 22, fol. 106^b (authors' translation and emphasis).

⁵⁵ Olsen 1987.

5.2.6 *First Phase of the Territorial Division, from the 1590s to 1613*

The struggle for control of trade in northern Fennoscandia was not only propelled by economic and fiscal motives. For the states concerned, these measures were also part of a protracted, more general struggle for hegemony in Scandinavia, with more comprehensive political and strategic connotations. In this context, the old archrivals Sweden and Denmark (together with Norway) stood against each other, partially because of old conflicts from the Kalmar union, the late medieval project to unite all three Scandinavian kingdoms in a real union under the leadership of the Danish monarch.⁵⁶ Sweden had managed to detach itself from these efforts early in the sixteenth century. After that, it became a primary Swedish objective to break out of what was interpreted as complete encirclement by the Danish-Norwegian side. In the south, west, and north, Danish or Norwegian territory closed the Swedish territory off from sea communication. Until the middle of the seventeenth century, Norway was still in possession of Jämtland/Härjedalen and Båhuslän, while Skåne and Halland were Danish provinces. Thus, Denmark controlled ship traffic through Øresund and to a great degree, the trade in the Baltic. Sweden's access to the Kattegat was reduced to a narrow corridor in the area of Lödöse/Gothenburg, protected by the fortress of Älvsborg. After the English and Dutch had 'rediscovered' the sea route to the White Sea in the middle of the sixteenth century, the question of control of these northern waters became connected with the dominion over the Baltic. The sea connection to Russia north of Norway and Finnmark was an important alternative to the Baltic traffic, but so far, Denmark-Norway controlled both sea routes. In addition to the customs control at Øresund, the Danish government sought to control the northern ship traffic from Vardøhus; they demanded fees from passing ships and asserted the right to issue passports for seafarers on their way to Kola and the White Sea.

One possible solution for Sweden was to carve out a corridor northwards to the Arctic Ocean. Therefore, fresh attention was paid to the ambiguous formulations about the border running "north into the ocean" (*norr i haffuitt*) or to "kajano more" (*helsingh haff*) in the old Swedish-Russian treaty from 1323. "North into the ocean" could be interpreted as north to the Arctic Ocean and thus used to justify a Swedish breakthrough to the ocean, situated somewhere between Varanger and Poluostrov rybachiy.

⁵⁶ The Kalmar union was a dynastic union between the three Nordic monarchies, Denmark, Norway, and Sweden, lasting from 1397 (1389) until 1521.

During the last decade before 1600, both Denmark-Norway and Sweden tried to obtain the best possible overview of Sámi settlement and tax collecting relationships and to strengthen their administrative and military control. On the Swedish side, several special commissions were appointed to document taxation rights, and at the same time, the county governors in northern Norway (Hartvig Bille, Claus Urne) received instructions from the government in Copenhagen to undertake similar investigations. To strengthen their control, these county governors also received orders to take up permanent residence in their counties. Meanwhile, Swedish administration was expanded with the establishment of a separate governor's office for the lappmark and the appointment of special bailiffs to supervise salmon fishing in Alta and Tana.

Moreover, both parties sought to expand their ecclesiastical and secular jurisdiction. In the course of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, a number of churches had been built in northern Fennoscandia, on the Norwegian side in the fishing villages along the Finnmark coast and on the Swedish side in the towns along the coast of the Gulf of Bothnia. As we have seen, the Swedish monarchy began a large-scale initiative to build churches in the interior at selected Sámi winter dwelling places. Yet, the plans also included church establishment out on the coast, as in Alta and Tysfjord. These measures, though, were frustrated by the Danish-Norwegian authorities, and in Tysfjord a church was erected on the Norwegian side. A temporary culmination in this series of displays intended to assert sovereignty came in 1599, when the king of Denmark and Norway, Christian IV, set out on a sea voyage past Finnmark and eastwards along the Kola coast to Kildin, in order to assert the interests of the unified monarchies. The king of Sweden, Karl IX, on his side, emphasized Swedish pretensions by incorporating the words 'King of the Lapps in the Northern Lands' (*de lappars i Nordlanden konung*) into his official title.

5.2.7 *The Struggle for the Coastal Sámi*

In the first decade of the seventeenth century, nevertheless, dominion over the coastal Sámi became the crucial issue, which was given concrete form in the struggle over the right to levy taxes. Taxation was a manifestation of authority that governments referred to first and foremost when they wanted to justify their territorial pretensions, i.e., demands for sovereignty over areas. In the second half of the sixteenth century, the situation was as follows with regard to taxation of the Sámi by the surrounding states:

Table 2.

Sweden collected tax from:	Denmark-Norway collected tax from:	Muscovy collected tax from:
All <i>the inland areas</i> in the lappmarks on the current Swedish and Finnish side	<i>The inland siidas:</i> Guovdageaidnu, Ávjovárri, Láhpovávri, Tenoby & Ohcejohka of <i>Torne lappmark</i> , as well as Anár (together called 'the South Mountain')	Most of <i>the inland siidas</i> on 'the South Mountain'—as well as <i>Kemi lappmark</i> (with the exception of the <i>siidas Kihitel</i> and <i>Bealdojávri</i>)
	The interior of <i>the Kola Peninsula</i>	The interior of <i>the Kola Peninsula</i>
<i>The coastal Sámi:</i> From <i>the Varanger fiord</i> until <i>South Troms/Ofoten</i> ,—occasionally also including northern part of <i>Nordland county</i> until <i>Tysfjord</i>	<i>The coastal Sámi:</i> From <i>the Varanger fiord</i> until the southern part of <i>Nordland county</i> , including <i>Beiar</i> n	<i>The coastal Sámi:</i> From <i>the Kola Peninsula</i> to and including the <i>Porsanger fiord</i> —even stretching as far as Malangen during the latest part of the sixteenth century

Mutual partitioning between the states started in 1595, when Sweden and Russia made peace after prolonged wars, which, with some pauses, had continued since 1572. In the peace treaty concluded at Teusina (Täysinnä) on the border of Estonia, Sweden had to waive its most far-reaching pretensions concerning the whole of the Kola Peninsula, but otherwise achieved a breakthrough to the Arctic Ocean. The Swedish-Russian border was supposed to be drawn a few kilometers east of Varanger. As for the Russians, they were excluded from taxing the coastal Sámi west of Varanger and the inland Sámi in Kemi lappmark and inner Finnmark.

The struggle for control of the Arctic region, therefore, was now between Sweden and Denmark-Norway. There were, however, negotiations and attempts to arrive at an amicable division of the land areas through arbitration. Here the parties laid out their arguments in support of their demands. On the Swedish side, the point of departure was primarily the taxation relationship, while the Danish-Norwegian side claimed that the mountain ridge called the Keel constituted the traditional border between the kingdoms. Yet in North Troms and Finnmark, where the Keel flattens out and the landscape changes to gentle ranges of hills and

rounded hilltops, references to a mountain ridge were not very relevant. For these areas, therefore, the Danish negotiators argued more vaguely that the border should be drawn "... at the places ... where it has been for time immemorial." An argument was advanced on grounds that later were to become encapsulated in the phrase 'age-old usage,' which has subsequently haunted the discussion of Sámi resource rights.

Based on the peace of Teusina, the Swedish authorities drew the conclusion that Sweden had the right to two-thirds of the territory between Malangen and Varanger, since the Russians' rights had now fallen to Sweden, and that consequently two-thirds of the total taxation rights over the Sámi in this area were now possessed by Sweden. From Malangen and southwards, on the contrary, Sweden and Denmark-Norway had equal rights (50–50), since the Sámi in this area traditionally had been liable to taxation from these two states.

On this basis, Karl IX made several proposals for territorial portioning. In 1601, he suggested that in addition to Sámi of the entire inland area, those of the coastal region around Varanger, Vadsø, and Alta should be placed under Swedish dominion, with Denmark-Norway having dominion over everything west and south of Alta. Before a negotiation session in 1603, however, he claimed that Sweden and Denmark-Norway jointly had the right to the mainland between Tysfjord and Malangen, whereas Denmark-Norway has exclusive rights only to the outer islands. In response, Danish negotiators claimed the mountain ridge as the border between the kingdoms, and they stressed that the settlement between Sweden and Russia on the Russian tax in 1595 could not affect Danish-Norwegian interests, because the right to taxation had to be construed as an right of usufruct (a right to use property owned by others) and Denmark-Norway had never granted the grand duke of Muscovy any taxation rights. While the right to taxation was emphasized as the basis for border drawing, one could also try to reduce its significance in this way. In other words, while the right to tax was generally advanced as the basis for the drawing of frontiers, it was also possible to disregard such rights.

Increased tension between the two northern states, including the building of fortifications at Årøya in the Alta fjord and to some extent the forced evacuation of the Sámi from the fjord areas on the Norwegian side, finally erupted into open conflict in the so-called war of Kalmar (1611–1613). In spite of the fact that the clash was provoked primarily by controversy over issues of sovereignty in the north, military action took place in southern and central Scandinavia, and the war received its name from the Swedish

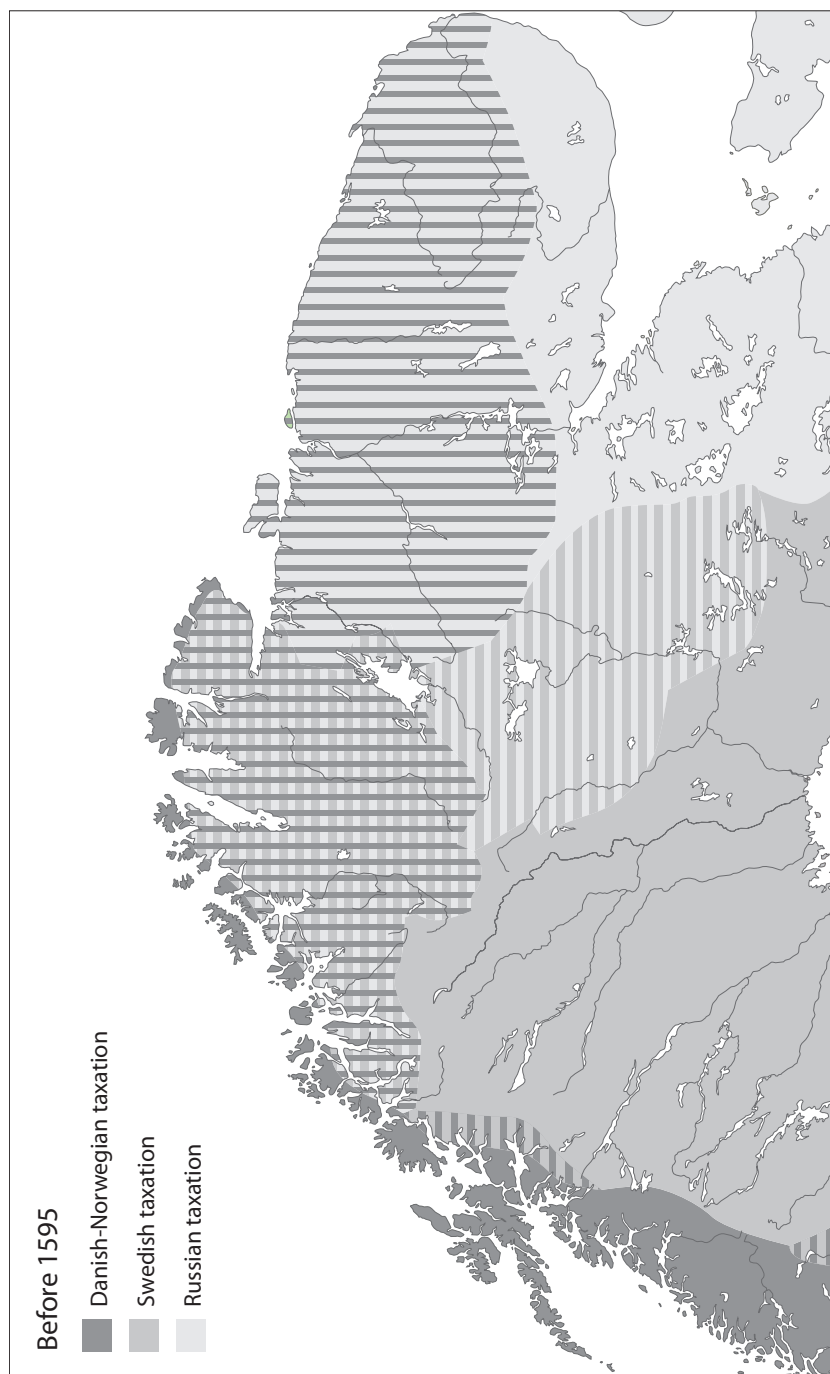
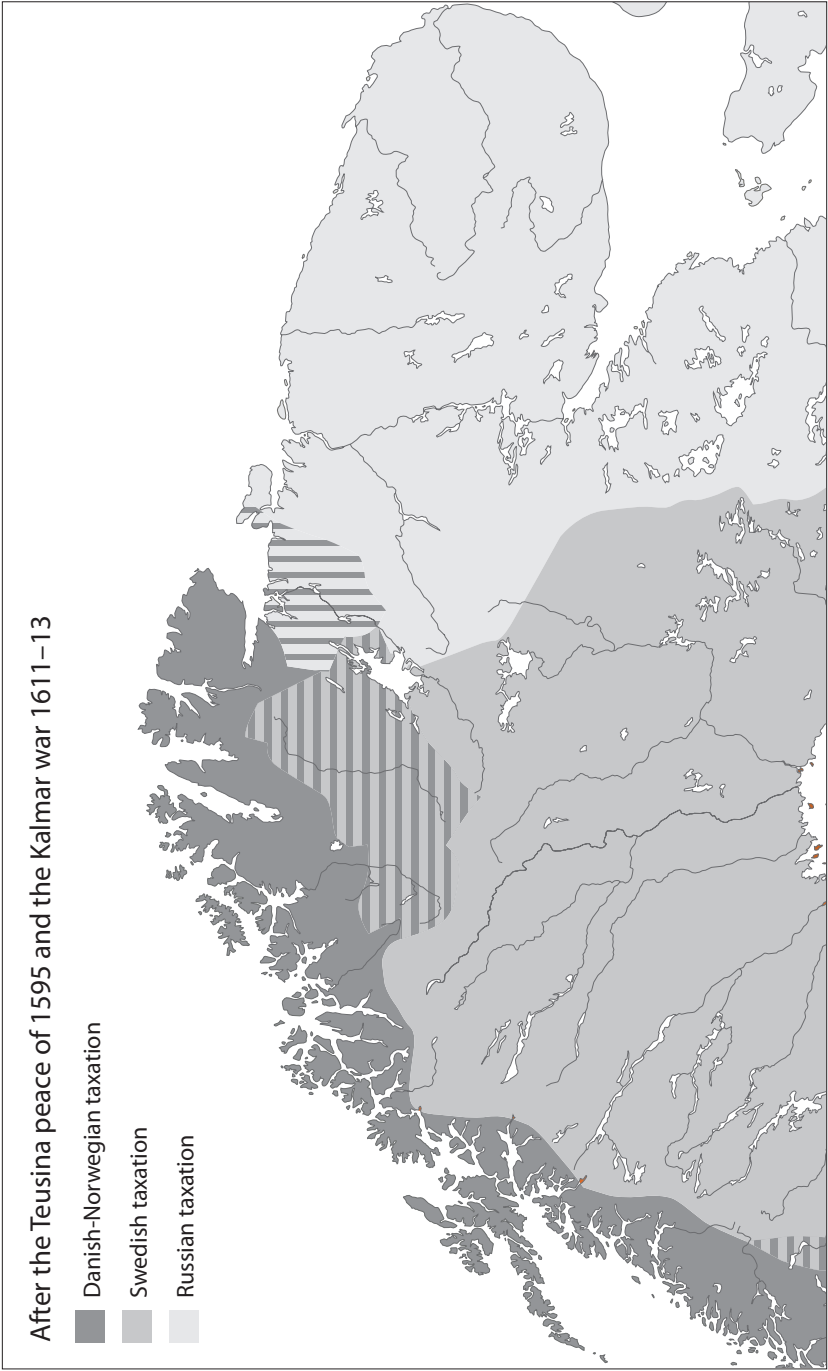


Fig. 51 and 52. The states' overlapping taxation areas in northern Fennoscandia, respectively before the Swedish-Russian peace treaty of 1595 and after the Kalmar War 1611–13.



fortress town of Kalmar, which was besieged for a time by Danish forces. The war ended in complete victory for Denmark-Norway, which gained full dominion over the coastal area and the fjords. Sovereignty over the coastal Sámi was unambiguously established as Danish-Norwegian. The double monarchy also assured its lordship over the northern sea routes, which were called *dominium maris* in the treaty language of the time. The wars that followed in the seventeenth century did not lead to any changes in the exercise of sovereignty or jurisdiction over the coastal Sámi.

5.2.8 *The Second Phase of the Division: the 1730s and 1740s*

Even though Danish-Norwegian sovereignty over the coastal area and the coastal Sámi had been established by the 1613 peace treaty, there remained important areas that were still subject to 'common taxation' by the two kingdoms, where no clear state borders had been established. The next phase in the division came in the middle of the eighteenth century, in connection with the border settlement after the Great Northern War (1700–1721), and involved the inland areas where Sweden and Denmark-Norway had overlapping taxation. On the entire stretch from South Trøndelag to Tana/Varanger, no final border between the kingdoms had been determined. Especially complex were the relationships in the South Sámi area and in the area that later became known as inner Finnmark, which from time immemorial had been called the south mountain (*sør-fjellet*) in Danish-Norwegian administrative terminology. This was still a common Norwegian-Swedish area, but under the firm control of Swedish ecclesiastical administration, in particular after the building of churches in Guovvdageaidnu and Ohcejohka (Utsjoki) in 1701. In the east, South Varanger, with the *síidas* Njávđán (Neiden), Báhpaveadji (Pasvik) and Beahcán (Pechenga), was still a common Norwegian-Russian taxation area, even though the area was solely under Russian jurisdiction. Only in 1826 was a final national border set in this region.

The delineation of the border between Sweden and Denmark-Norway in the middle of the eighteenth century took place in an entirely different strategic situation than the one that had been dominant through most of the seventeenth century. From the 1640s, Sweden had been on the offensive and stood out as the leading power in Scandinavia. The old Danish and Norwegian provinces mentioned earlier were conquered, and, at the same time, the Swedish state occupied possessions around the Baltic. Yet after the Great Northern War, Sweden could no longer maintain its posi-

tion as a great power. Exhausted and defeated, Sweden had to cede all its possessions south of the Baltic and in northern Germany. Denmark-Norway, on the other hand, found itself on the side of the allied victors Russia and Saxony-Poland. The border clash led to extensive investigations on both sides, carried out by special commissioners and 'border engineers' who had to investigate the topography as well as possible, measure the disputed mountain chains and land areas, and map both countries' territorial claims and demands. In addition, testimonies were obtained from farmers and reindeer-herding Sámi to ascertain their views of where the border ran, and where their respective usage areas extended. All this material thus formed a basis for the actual border negotiations, in which the negotiators worked through a number of disputed areas over several meetings. On the Swedish side, these testimonies were recorded at the ordinary district court assemblies (*häradsstingen*) from 1739 on, and they can be found in the district courts' protocols. On the Norwegian side, the work was led by Major Peter Schnitler, who was appointed border commissioner and carried out a whole series of special witness examinations in the period 1742–45. This work was recorded in the Border examination protocols, seven large volumes that contain very extensive and valuable material about settlement, usage, and topographical conditions in the border areas.

The argumentation from the border negotiations that followed gives interesting insight into what kind of general principles the national states referred to and which tangible outcomes this might have. Basically, there were three ways one could argue in order to determine the frontier: 1) Either one could take as a point of departure the mountain ridge, or *Kjølen*, defined as the series of highest mountain peaks and the divide, and claim that in principle this made up the border between the states. That is to say, one sought to give the geographic concept of 'the mountain ridge' a political function; 2) One could argue from actual possession, (*possessio* as it was called using an expression from Roman law), that is, to point out that certain areas had been under the one state's exercise of authority from time immemorial; 3) A third basis was to point to borders that had previously been established by treaty. In the first of these principles, we see the position adopted by Denmark-Norway during the border negotiations early in the seventeenth century. During these negotiations, Denmark-Norway primarily argued on the basis of the mountain ridge, while Sweden rested its case on possession. As we shall see, this did not apply absolutely: in certain disputed areas, Denmark-Norway also

argued from possession, while the mountain ridge played a certain role in Swedish arguments.

Any argument that took as its starting point the mountain ridge presupposed precise investigations of topographic relationships and mapping of the mountains' height and the divide. Yet, an argument from possession was in many ways even more complicated, because it required equally precise investigations and provoked even more discussion. That is, the claims of the two states to rights of possession could only be realistic if they were tied to the inhabitants and the actual use that they made of the territory. In the end, it was only the subjects of the two states who could exercise possession in practice, through their actual use of the area. That is why it became so important to map the extent of the areas used by farmers and the Sámi: whether the farms' outlying field rights reached up to the mountain sections or whether they bordered common lands, and where the Sámi reindeer pasture areas were situated. From the bailiwick of Namdalen and northwards, it was no longer satisfactory for Schnitler to take testimonies only from the farmers as he had done thus far; he also had to pose his questions to the reindeer-herding Sámi who carried on their migrations in the interior.

However, this opened up a whole series of questions, because it still was unclear to which state a number of these reindeer-herding Sami actually belonged. For one thing, there were the so-called 'common districts' in inner Finnmark that bore this name precisely because both states collected taxes here. Further south, a large number of the reindeer-herding Sami paid taxes to both states, because the areas across which they ranged crossed the mountains or included disputed areas. This brought up once more the old problem of whether or not the right to tax could be converted to dominion. During the negotiations in the eighteenth century, though, there was further movement on the question of what kind of exercise of authority should qualify as title for possession, and secular and ecclesiastical jurisdiction were also brought into the picture. The argumentation came to revolve partly around which conversion key should be used, when all forms of authority should be evaluated together. As an example, we can take the Swedish position on the Finnmark dispute during a negotiation that took place at the bailiff's farm of Ervik, close to Trondenes in 1747–48 (the Nordland meeting). Here, the Swedish side again produced the assertion about having two-third's right to taxation as a result of the peace of Teusina, but in fact, Sweden also had full ecclesiastical and secular jurisdiction as well, and according to the Swedish negotiators, this was of equal value to the taxation. In all, therefore, in their view Sweden was

justified in claiming five-sixths of the total dominion over the common areas.

A similar mode of reasoning was presented for the Tysfjord-Malangen area. At the outset, Swedish negotiators claimed that the mountain ridge was not the border between the states as such, but between purely Swedish territory on the east side and a Norwegian-Swedish common area on the west side, since both states had taxed the Sámi here. To be sure, after the Kalmar war, Sweden had waived the right to the ocean, the coastal area, and the coastal Sámi. Yet according to the Swedes, this still left the hinterland on the western side of the mountain ridge, and this ought to be divided correspondingly. During the Nordland meeting, however, the Swedes agreed that the mountain ridge should form the national border, on the condition that the inland Sámi in the village of Kaitum be allowed to migrate with their reindeer out to the coast during summer, according to old custom and use. This consideration for the reindeer-herding Sámi's migrations formed the basis for a later supplement to the border treaty, the Lapp Codicil, which was supposed to guarantee the nomads' rights on a general basis (see below).

However, Denmark-Norway did not follow unambiguously and without exception the mountain ridge principle and Sweden correspondingly did not categorically stick to possession as a basis for negotiations. In particular, this became evident in the treatment of the area of Vefsn on Norwegian side and the adjacent Sámi village of Vapsten in Ume lappmark on the Swedish side. Here, Schnitler had documented that the Sámi paid a lease fee to Norwegian landowners for the use of mountain areas for grazing. In line with this, the Norwegian negotiators claimed that actual possession must serve as a basis for the boundary, because it would give a greater area to Denmark-Norway than if the mountain ridge principle were followed. Nevertheless, the final drawing of the border followed the Swedish claim, and thus it ran along the highest mountains and the divide.

Several of the disputed areas where the states' claims were far apart, were, however, not resolved one by one, but put aside until the final negotiations that took place at Strömstad in 1749–50, between the border commissioners Mangelsen and Klinckowström. Not until the final round of talks could the remaining disputes (twenty-six in all) be dealt with and considered together. There was an unwillingness to leave the room during any reciprocal concessions or adaptations, for fear of creating a precedent by making concessions that fixed the positions until a later point in time. Accordingly, it was not until the final meeting that the principle

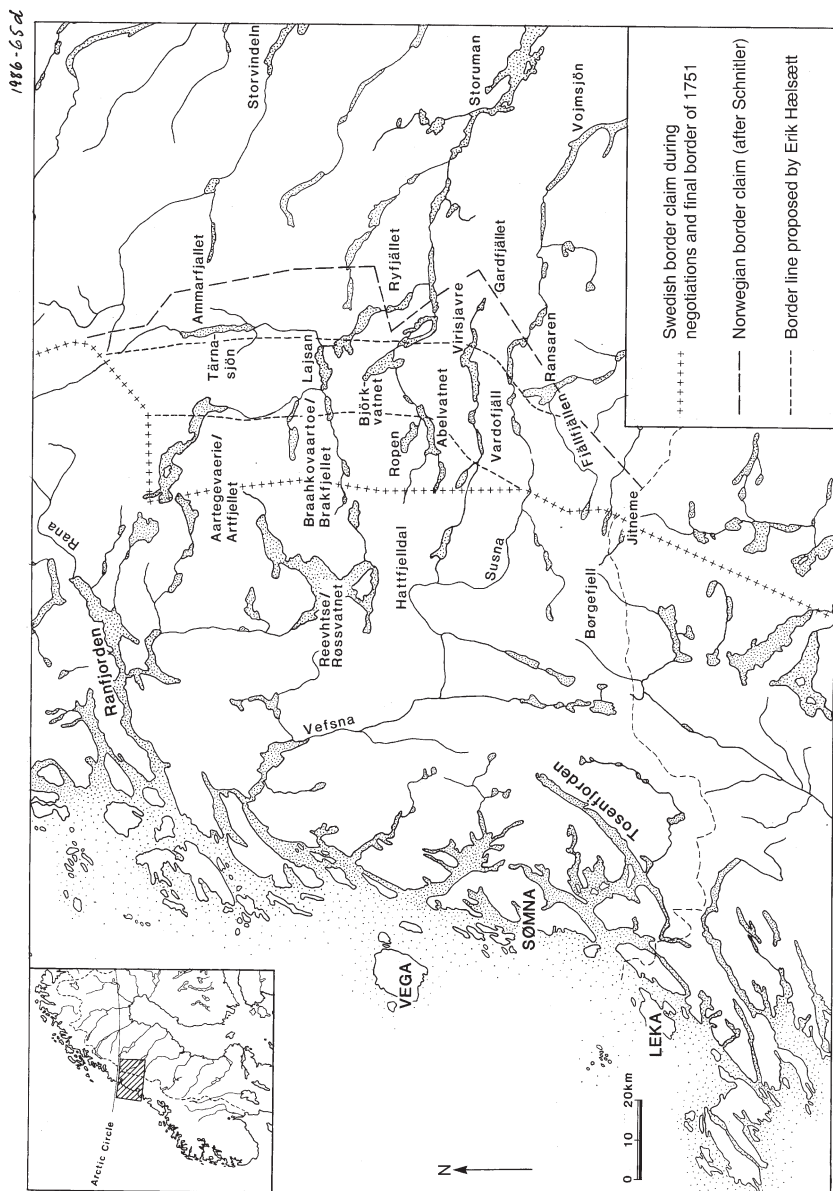


Fig. 53. Sweden's and Denmark-Norway's border claims in the South Sámi area (Helgeland/Västerbotten).

of the nomads' right to migrate freely could definitively be upheld and enshrined in the Lapp Codicil. If there had been agreement on this point earlier, the Danish-Norwegian side might justifiably have been afraid that this would have had a prejudicial influence on claims not yet taken up for discussion.

The Finnmark dispute was also resolved at this final meeting. The question of inner Finnmark posed a dilemma for the Danish-Norwegian side, since the Norwegian claim here had to be based on the principle of possession, and involved a delineation based on the extension of the various Sámi groups that Denmark-Norway had taxed and sought to exert authority over. If the Danish-Norwegian negotiators became too inclined towards the mountain ridge principle in other disputes, they would have run the risk of finding themselves precluded from using the possession argument with the Finnmark. The situation was even more complicated because the parties were clearly in disagreement about the northern limit of the common area in inner Finnmark. While the Swedish proposal for the limit followed the old *siida* borders corresponding to the hunting and trapping livelihood, the Danish-Norwegian proposal took as its point of departure relatively new migration patterns that had developed with the expansion of reindeer nomadism in Finnmark. From the end of the seventeenth century, groups of Sámi both from the interior and from the coast had taken up reindeer herding, and these two forms of pastoralism were in the process of merging and developing the familiar migratory pattern of later times, with movements between summer grazing in the coastal region and on the islands and winter grazing in the interior. Schnitler for one claimed that these nomads were to be understood unambiguously as Danish-Norwegian subjects, called 'private Norwegian mountain Finns.' By following the nomads' winter grazing areas, the border for the 'common area' would then be pushed southwards, since the new migration pattern broke into the inland *siida*'s traditional hunting and trapping areas. At the Strömstad meeting, however, Sweden did not insist on the 5/6–1/6 partitioning. One reason for this was the fact that Denmark-Norway had exercised pressure on Sweden in order to have the mountain villages Idre and Särna returned to them, which had been occupied by the Swedes since 1645 without Denmark-Norway having ever formally relinquished them. Sweden therefore offered Denmark-Norway all of the Guovdageaidnu and Ávjovárri *siidas*, and gave up their claims on Varanger as well. Yet the rest of the common area as a whole should come to Sweden—among other things, the *siidas* of Rounala, Bealdojávri, and Anár (Inari), together with

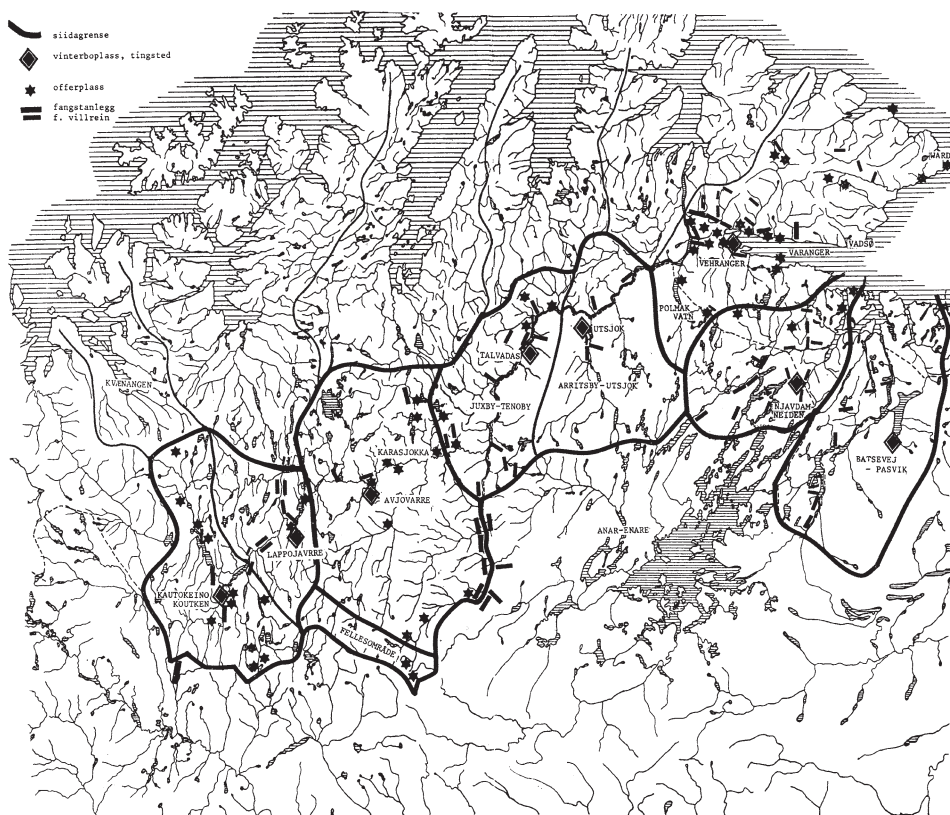


Fig. 54. Siida areas in inner Finnmark (called “the South Mountain” from Norwegian point of view). (from Vorren 1977.) The two easternmost siidas were regarded as belonging to the so-called “North Mountain” (the East Sámi siidas on Kola).

the whole of Ohcejohka *siida*, which comprised areas on both sides of the Tana river.

Thus, it was actually the traditional Sámi *siida* borders that were used as a basis for the final delimitation of the border through 'the common area,' even though the quantitative division, such as the size of the area and which *siidas* should go to each of the states, was a matter for bargaining and was influenced by the contemporary political context between the great powers. In the end game, therefore, Denmark-Norway managed to grab an extra prize: if the *siida* borders had been followed consistently and the *siidas* had been divided between the states, Sweden would have received all of the Ohcejohka *siida*, including the old Tenoby area that lay west of Tana. However, with Russia as a backer, Denmark-Norway managed to get the border pushed back all the way east to Tana.

5.2.9 *The Lapp Codicil*

During the final negotiations, the parties agreed upon an addendum to the border treaty, with a view towards regulating the problems resulting from the fact that the newly-defined border would cut through a number of Sámi usage and settlement areas. The full name of the supplement was the *First Codicil and Supplement to the Border Treaty between the Monarchies of Norway and Sweden Concerning the Lapps*, usually called the Lapp Codicil. The border treaty and the Lapp Codicil were signed by the negotiators on the same day. Both documents have two dates, September 21 and October 2, 1751, because Sweden had not yet adopted the Gregorian calendar. Both in the supplement and in the actual treaty, it was asserted that the two documents were equally valid. Judging from the relevance of the matter, the codicil was also a necessary and integrated part of the treaty. Furthermore, the Lapp Codicil was in fact one of two supplements to the treaty proper. The second supplement was concerned with the practicalities of establishing a border, such as the thinning of trees on the boundary lines and the placing of cairns along the border.⁵⁷

The Lapp Codicil's decisions can be summed up as follows. First and foremost, the reindeer-herding Sámi's right to continued free travel and migration with the reindeer herds was guaranteed. In the future, however, they would be forced to choose state citizenship and be liable for taxes in one of the states, based on closer investigations about the location of

⁵⁷ Johnsen 1923, 188.

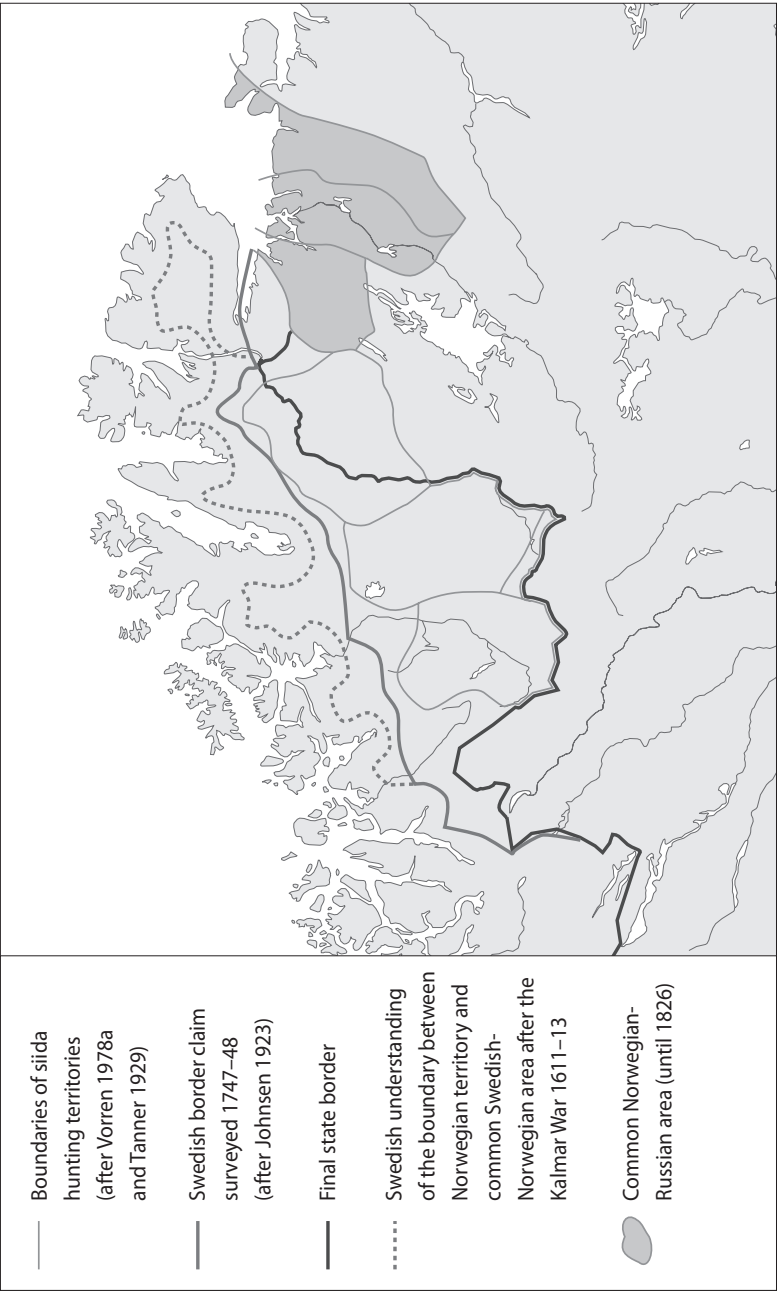


Fig. 55. The states' territorial border claims in present-day inner Finnmark during the negotiations 1747–51. (After Johnsen 1923.)

their winter pastures.⁵⁸ Furthermore, they were supposed to pay rent for the use of pastures on the other state's land.⁵⁹ The number of migrating Sámi and the size of the reindeer herds had to be declared to the other country's authorities via special bailiffs appointed by the state.⁶⁰ In return for payment of a small fee, the migrating Sámi were also assured the right to fishing during their seasonal visits, both at the ocean on the Norwegian side and in the watercourses on the Swedish side. Moreover, the codicil contained special legal rules for how smaller, limited disputes that arose in connection with the migrations were supposed to be resolved. Such matters that concerned "the Lapp matters in particular and the Lapps' customary way of life" were supposed to be resolved outside the ordinary court system, with a large degree of Sámi assistance.⁶¹ With regard to grazing rights on the other state's land, the nomads' usage should not only be allowed; they were to be received in a friendly fashion, protected and assisted in the best way, even in time of war. Clause 10 of the Codicil states:

Inasmuch as the Lapps need land in both countries, they shall be allowed to migrate with their reindeer herds over the border into the other country in autumn and spring, according to old custom. And hereafter as of old, just as with that country's own subjects, except in such places that are announced below, to make use of land and shore for the diversion of their animals and themselves, and then they are to be received in a friendly fashion, protected and helped in exercising their rights, even during time of war, which definitely should not bring any change to Lapp affairs; and least of all should the foreign Lapps be exposed to plundering or any kind of coercion or violence, which occurs in times of war, but be viewed and treated as our own subjects on whatever side they are then staying as foreigners.

In case of war between the states, the migrating Sámi were supposed to be allowed to remain neutral, on the condition that they did not commit any hostile act.⁶² Finally, clause 28 of the codicil contained special provisions for the inhabitants of the Ohcejohka *siida*, who had had their area divided in two by the borderline following the Tana. The Ohcejohka Sámi fished salmon extensively in the Tana and were dependent on the tradesmen at the mouth of the Tana for selling their fish. Here, the codicil confirmed that those Sámi who became Swedish subjects exclusively after delimita-

⁵⁸ Lapp Codicil, § 4, 5 and 6. See Cramér and Prawitz 1970, 109.

⁵⁹ Ibid. § 13, 14.

⁶⁰ Ibid. § 18.

⁶¹ Ibid. § 22.

⁶² Ibid. § 11.

tion of the borders should still have their trading rights with the Danish trade monopoly, in the same way on Danish-Norwegian subjects.

As we have seen, during the negotiating process, the Swedish representatives made a request for the reindeer-herding Sámi to have free rights to migration, with special reference to the conditions on the Tysfjord-Malangen stretch. In the final negotiations, the Swedish delegates made the demand as a general condition in order to counter what they saw as a concession over the mountain ridge line. Still, it was probably not so difficult for the Danish-Norwegian negotiators to accept this proposal.⁶³ Both parties had touched on whether an earlier treaty could be invoked in this connection, that is, the peace of Stettin of 1570 that brought an end to seven years of war between the two northern states (1563–70). The treaty affirmed that usage rights (easements) held by one state's subjects in the other state should still remain in force.⁶⁴ Even if he was skeptical about this, the Norwegian border commissioner Schnitler had deliberated about whether this provision might be invoked in the case of Vefsn/Rana, in order to assure the rights of Norwegian Sámi to Swedish forests. A direct reference to the peace of Stettin was also included in the original draft of the Lapp Codicil, but was later deleted on the recommendation of the Danish-Norwegian legal experts.⁶⁵ The Danish-Norwegian approval of migration rights thus seems to have had its origin in a general recognition of the problems that would otherwise arise by establishing a borderline that cut through time-honored Sámi usage areas. When the Finnmark dispute was also resolved in such a way that several *siida* borders and migration patterns were severed, the need for a special arrangement was further emphasized.

Otherwise, the final border treaty rescinded all earlier demands and rights that one state or its subjects had had across the border and into neighboring lands, including taxation claims.⁶⁶ The peace of Stettin's conditions were thus declared null and void. The Lapp Codicil represented the only exception to this general cancellation of rights on the other state's land. This underscores how far the two sides were prepared to be flexible in order to accommodate Sámi demands, through the access they obtained to use the land on both sides of the border.

⁶³ Bjarnar 1989, 62, 74.

⁶⁴ Hansen, introduction to Schnitler, vol. III, 1985, xv.

⁶⁵ Hansen 1989, 41.

⁶⁶ Lapp Codicil, § 2, 3.



Fig. 56. Blocking fences from early reindeer herding in the Kobbelv area, Sørfold, Nordland. (Photo: Lars Ivar Hansen.)

The Lapp Codicil has therefore been characterized as a testimony of advanced legal culture in the two states concerned, and an expression of Enlightenment ideals concerning the interests of indigenous peoples. The codicil has also been described as the oldest document that “can be said to contain a real codification of the Sámis’ rights.”⁶⁷ In spite of increasing pressure against the codicil from governmental authorities and expanding agricultural interests in the nineteenth century, even at that time it was referred to as a letter of freedom for the Sámi. With the general shift in political attitudes towards minorities in the 1960s and 1970s, this assessment found considerable support among scholars and in wider circles. The Lapp Codicil has been called the Magna Carta of the Sámi, a comparison with the great English charter of freedom of 1215, which constitutes a cornerstone of the English constitution and since then has remained standing as a symbol for fundamental human rights.⁶⁸ Similar to the English model, the Lapp Codicil has thus been interpreted as a fundamental symbol and a basic document for legitimating legal

⁶⁷ Resolution at the 6th Nordic Sámi conference in Hætta, 1968, cited in Minde 1989, 4.

⁶⁸ *Diedut* vol. I, 1989.

demands for all of the Sámi people.⁶⁹ Until 1854, the Lapp Codicil was actually the only written legal source of general character that dealt with the position of the reindeer-herding Sámi.⁷⁰ Moreover, within later legal historical research, there have been both limiting interpretations of the Lapp Codicil, in which scholars claimed that the text mainly aimed at warranting usage rights for the nomads, and more expansive interpretations which claim that the Codicil has relevance for other Sámi groups as well, and even justifies Sámi ownership rights to certain areas.

An awareness of the significance of the migrations for the nomads and the goal to take care of the 'Sámi Nation' are documented in the reports produced as part of the border negotiations. The Danish jurists Hielmstjerne and Stampe's 1750 report declared that:

... This migration from the one state to the other is quite necessary for the conservation of the Lappish Nation, and the majority of the Lapps would have to die if they were to be bound to remain permanently either on the Norwegian or on the Swedish side of the mountain ridge.⁷¹

It is also clear that these jurists' analyses emanated from a legal philosophical basis created by international philosophers of natural law such as Samuel Pufendorf and Hugo Grotius. According to this way of thinking, all peoples—regardless of whether they belonged to Western European culture or not, and regardless of whether they had been the object of colonization or not—had certain 'natural' and inalienable rights. In summing up his investigations, Major Schnitler also stressed the Sámi's indigenous status: "The Lapp Nation has since time immemorial been a free people, until their neighbors, the Norwegians, Swedes, and the Novgorod Russians, forced them to be liable to taxation."⁷²

There is little reason to doubt that the Lapp Codicil came into existence at a point in time when the general intellectual and moral climate went far towards recognizing indigenous peoples' rights. However, as has been pointed out, it was a remarkable stroke of good fortune to combine the spirit of the Enlightenment with strategic foreign policy aims in which the Sámi's rights could serve as a lever for state claims. In those areas in which the documented rights of states remained unclear, it was henceforth

⁶⁹ Minde 1989, 4.

⁷⁰ Jebens 1986, 217.

⁷¹ Hielmstjerne and Stampe 1904 (1750).

⁷² Schnitler vol. 3, 1985, 10.

possible to negotiate about the rights of a group of people, rather than resorting to arguments based purely on territorial claims.⁷³

Primarily, the Lapp Codicil aimed at preserving the status quo, both concerning established modes of usage and the states' administrative practice. To be sure, some new procedures were introduced in order to assure future migration rights, but in essence the codicil represented a codification and justification of the legal and administrative practice that had developed as result of the way in which the states had responded to changing Sámi patterns of occupation. To formulate such a supplementary treaty that might guarantee this was all the more difficult, inasmuch as legal and administrative practice had developed somewhat differently on each side of the border.⁷⁴ This also led to some halting, imprecise parallels in the codicil's text. In the introductory paragraphs, which seek to define the nomads' citizenship according to the location of their winter pastures, so-called tax lands on both sides of the border were invoked and apparently put on an equal footing—in spite of the fact that the Swedish tax land institution had ancient roots and was tied to the control of land and fields, while the Norwegian Lapp tax did not justify any special land rights. In addition, the collection of the Norwegian Lapp tax had only recently resumed (1742) after a long interruption. When clause 2 of the text asserted that no Sámi could own tax land or lease-land (*Bøxel-land*) in both states, the terminology was also a little odd in relation to Norwegian property law, since the Sámi on the Norwegian side actually leased mountain pastures from Norwegian landowners, and were far from owning them. Nor did the wording make it clear that this was a special arrangement only found in Helgeland.⁷⁵

Later research has shown that the Lapp Codicil in some districts could have relevance and be used for other types of resource management than that involving reindeer herding. Concerning the Tana watercourse, Steinar Pedersen has shown that the rules laid down in the Lapp Codicil were used at the beginning of the nineteenth century to resolve fishing disputes that arose between permanent resident Sámi on each side of the Tana river. The legal procedures generated by the Lapp Codicil became an object of attention at the highest government levels in both states.⁷⁶

⁷³ Bjarnar 1989, 71.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 74.

⁷⁵ A more detailed discussion of the tax land institution on the Swedish side, and the leasing practice on the Norwegian, will be given below, section 5.3.

⁷⁶ Petersen 1994, 35.

Throughout the nineteenth century, the Lapp Codicil was exposed to hard pressure from proponents of expanding agricultural interests. They considered it a hindrance for the promotion of more 'essential' interests, and they began to advocate the unilateral termination of the Lapp Codicil by Norway. This demand became even stronger after the frontier between Norway and what was now the Russian Grand Duchy of Finland was closed to migrations from the Norwegian side in 1852. No such termination, though, took place, and as a basis for the reindeer-herding Sámi's migratory rights the Lapp Codicil was not replaced until the Swedish-Norwegian common Lapp Law of 1883.

At the time when the codicil was conceived, the states' and the Sámis' interests were to a great extent concurrent, which contributed to the special way in which it was conceived. In the future, however, these interests diverged and the codicil therefore became the object of widely different interpretations. The fact that the codicil was formulated as a presumptive common solution, seeking to unite highly different administrative practices on each side, also allowed for various interpretations in the future. In spite of the fact that access to migration for reindeer-herding Sámi has been regulated several times since—mainly with the reindeer-grazing conventions of 1919 and 1972—there is still an ongoing discussion about what kind of status the Lapp Codicil has as a legal source for Sámi rights relative to the states' internal law.

5.3 THE LEGAL SITUATION OF THE SÁMI DURING THE SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

5.3.1 *Rights and Legal Systems*

The question of Sámi rights to resources has a double resonance. From the outset, it is clear that Sámi communities had their own, internal rules for distribution of disposal over various types of resource units as far back as it is possible to survey. Studies of earlier modes of Sámi social organization indicate that the distribution of land and resources was regulated both externally, between the different *siidas*, and internally, between the individual members of the *siida*. Which principles were followed, especially in the case of resource distribution among the *siida* members, varied, however, from region to region and over time. Customary principles that emanate from the Sámi's own regulations of access to resources can be characterized as internal Sámi legal systems. As we have seen, many of the earlier social dynamics were probably connected to breaches of

customary rules for the distribution of resources and products, which thus caused social tensions within the *siida*.

Nevertheless, since the beginning of the seventeenth century, the question about Sámi resource rights and their legal status has most often been debated and formulated in relation to the legal systems of the states in which they found themselves. These systems were increasingly applied to the Sámi as the Sámi settlement area was definitively being subjected to the jurisdiction of state authorities as a result of colonization and the drawing of borders. Thus, the question of Sámi rights must be considered relatively, in relation to which legal system or which set of legal conceptions one refers. It is symptomatic that the questions about Sámi rights only appear and become a matter for the authorities in the course of intensified struggles between the states for sovereign control over the Sámi in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. From the time that large parts of the Sámi area were seen as having fallen under the control of one or the other state authority, questions were increasingly raised about the legal status of the traditional forms of Sámi resource utilization. In this way, development in northern Fennoscandia falls into a general international pattern, formed by the European states' colonization of peoples and land areas in non-European areas. In a number of the European colonial powers, we also see that the conquest of foreign lands and other peoples lead state authorities and men of law to develop various theories for the legal position and rights of the conquered peoples.⁷⁷

In this process, however, one has to distinguish between several different stages and levels. Throughout the nearly 400 years of juridical and legal historical discussion about the Sámi's rights to land and water, these levels have often been mixed together, such that the result has not always been clear. Partly this is connected with the fact that within juridical and constitutional thinking, there has been an evolution of ideas, and partly because questions concerning Sámi usage, customs, and rights have most often been posed in terms dictated by the neighboring peoples' legal conceptions.

First, we must deal with questions attached to sovereignty or rights to hegemony over the Sámi settlement areas, i.e., to which state the various Sámi groups should be subject. Were they unambiguously and incontestably subject to one state authority, and how effectively did that state manage to put into effect its administration and legal jurisdiction among those

⁷⁷ Mörner 1979.

Sámi? Already early in the fourteenth century, the coastal Sámi south of Finnmark had come under Norwegian secular and religious jurisdiction. This was nevertheless denied by Sweden in the sixteenth century, as we have seen, and Swedish authorities did not accept unequivocal Danish-Norwegian hegemony over the coastal Sámi areas on the entire stretch from Varanger to Tysfjord until after the war of Kalmar. The areas in present-day inner Finnmark were not finally divided between Sweden-Finland and Denmark-Norway until 1751. Still, the East Sámi *siidas* in what is today South Varanger that were under Russian jurisdiction remained, but in those areas both Norway and Russia had taxation rights up to the partition in 1826.

The next question is, to what extent did the Sámi as a collective, as a people, assume any special legal position after having become subject unequivocally to one state authority? Here one may discuss the internal justice system of the separate states (Denmark-Norway and Sweden), as well as rights defined by international law. Did the legal systems of the states recognize exclusive Sámi rights to practice specific livelihoods within specific areas, as stipulated, for example, by the cultivation border (*odlingsgränsen*) on the Swedish side?⁷⁸ Alternatively, were there special institutions and forms of property within the states' legal systems that might either come into conflict with Sámi customs or be exploited by the Sámi? The right to use common land on the Norwegian side may serve as an example of the latter. The nomadic Sámi's right to migrate over the border after 1751, on the contrary, must be considered as a privilege guaranteed by international law, since it had been confirmed in a treaty concluded by the two states.

Thirdly, there is the question of private legal rights, that is, whether traditional, customary Sámi resource usage was subject to individual legal protection (a protection against interference from other users and interests) in the same manner as for the majority population within each of the states.

The analysis is further complicated, however, by the fact that these different levels influenced each other. Independent of other factors, state authorities would often take traditional Sámi area usage as their point of departure and use it as a basis when they sought to establish adminis-

⁷⁸ In the lappmarks of northern Sweden, this was a provisional border introduced in 1867 between the mountain areas reserved for reindeer herding and the lower regions available for agriculture. See Lundmark 2006, 137.

tration and taxation in the Sámi areas. Yet, this might also be prompted by their relationship to other states. During the delineation of the border between Denmark-Norway and Sweden, we have seen that the states primarily used the Sámi's mutual area limits as criteria for defining the border. Therefore, they stressed the mapping of traditional Sámi usage. Through this process, the traditional Sámi use of land areas could be well documented and given a certain protection for the future, because the states' administration and territorial demands relied on this documentation. In a few cases, the Sámi use of individual resource units was actually exempted from the prevailing system of property and land ownership, in such a way that the Sámi had latitude to practice their own principles internally. As we shall see, however, this exception was of relatively short duration.

One final question remains, in that much of the discussion by legal historians and jurists in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries has employed a more modern understanding of the concept of property rights, which has then been applied to cases in the past without taking into consideration how property and rights were understood and treated in earlier times.

In the following section, we shall look at some central institutions that became important for the Sámi's legal situation on the Norwegian and Swedish sides during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It is best to examine each side separately, since medieval Norwegian and Swedish laws, which were also used as a basis in the Finnish area, have taken somewhat different courses. On the Swedish side, we will focus on the so-called tax land institution; on the Norwegian side, it is interesting to study how Sámi usage compared to the traditional land ownership system and the old Norwegian right of access to common lands.

5.3.2 *The Tax Land Institution on the Swedish Side*

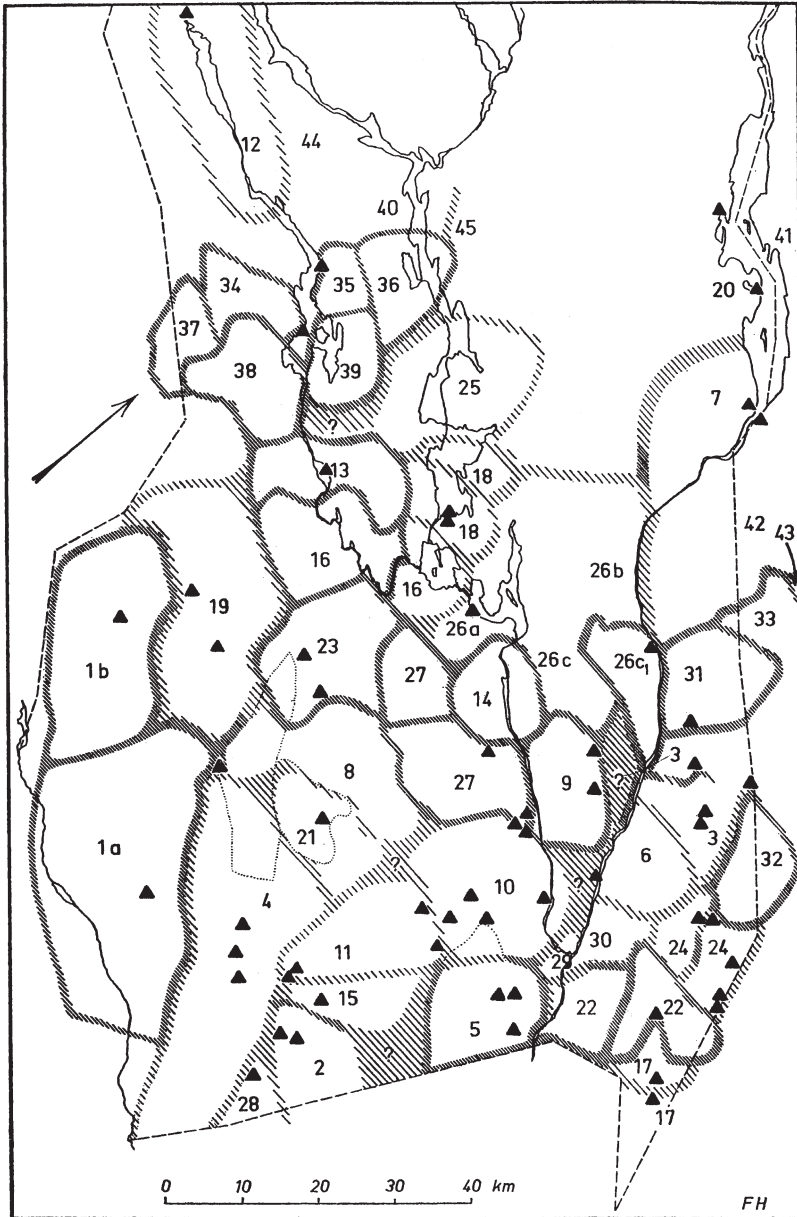
Earlier, we saw how the different parts of a *siida*'s resource base could be managed in various ways, partly by individual families and households with individual acquisition of the yield, and partly through the joint effort of the entire *siida* collective. Such a dividing line between collective and household-based utilization of different resource types was an essential element in the model that Väinö Tanner reconstructed for the East Sámi *siida* communities, presented in chapter 4. Tanner claimed that the individual families, in principle, had access to parts of the resource base (such as lake fishing and individual hunting areas) by virtue of their membership in the *siida*, and that they had a conditional usage right on behalf of

the collective. In spite of this, it seems as if the individual families had developed a sort prescriptive usage right to the individual areas, such that, year after year, they returned to the same fishing waters and the same autumn dwelling places. Over time, another practice had also developed, whereby the right to specific fishing waters most often was handed down from father to son.

We are now going to take a closer look at the resource management system as it was practiced within Sámi areas on the Swedish side during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Here, it seems that individual use of resources was even more pronounced and developed as a system. Individual Sámi paid an annual tax to the state for using a clearly-delimited land area within the *siida* territory, which the family or lineage used on a permanent basis and which was inherited. Such an area was called a tax land (*skattland*). This tax land institution merits closer examination in order to clarify what actual and historical content lay in this freedom of disposition or use. Was it a question of a real property right for individual families or just a limited, conditional right of usufruct? Are the historical origins to be sought in the western lappmarks, or had the system developed from something corresponding to the resource management farther east? To what degree did ideas about prescriptive rights to individual usage areas manifest themselves, and to what degree did the Sámi see themselves as actual owners of the areas? Could more specific livelihood conditions have played a role in creating the system, and to what degree was it influenced or established through the interference of the Swedish government authority in the Sámi areas? These questions have been debated in the field of legal history throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and various answers have been given.

The Swedish scholar Johannes Schefferus, who at the end of the seventeenth century published an extensive work in Latin on the lappmarks and the Sámi mode of living, did not doubt that this division of the *siida* territory was of genuine Sámi origin, with roots far back in time. The system was based on each family group making use of a precise and limited land area, with a selection of resources necessary for their subsistence. According to Schefferus' understanding, this form of land division did not come about from the initiative of Swedish authorities or as a result of their taxation:

These Lapp villages are so extensive that several families could be housed there, each of which is counted as a 'smoke' [Swedish *rök*, Latin *focus* meaning 'fireplace, hearth'] by the Swedes. Each family has its separate and dis-



tinct area in the village, on which it supports itself and its livestock. Yet, this is not arranged like a farm, which must be underlined so that no one gets the wrong idea. Rather, it is a large open area that stretches far in all directions and includes brooks, lakes, woods etc., all belonging to a certain 'smoke'... Such 'smokes' are in every village almost as numerous as the families, who are independent and do not have to serve others because of poverty. Thus, Åsele Lapp village has around 50 'smokes.' In others, there are more or fewer according to the size. These 'smokes' have special names, which I consider unnecessary to enumerate here...

This third division of Lappland has not been made recently... but existed already in ancient times, which one is impelled to believe, because no other one was known by the Lapps or authorized by the Swedes, as long as Lappland was subject to their power. The names too are old and not derived from such new conditions that they could raise any doubt, which I observe, so that it will be clear, that with this people everything is of an original simplicity and in accordance with its great age.⁷⁹

The actual tax land designation appears in the source material from the middle of the seventeenth century, and then only in the southern lappmarks (Ume, Pite, and Lule). In the north, it appears somewhat later.⁸⁰ An individual form of taxation based on disposition of specific resources, though, seems to have roots further back on the Swedish side. Already in the sixteenth century, individual taxation of lake fishing within the *siidas* took place, with individual Sámi paying for the use of separate fishing lakes (*träsk*). The special assessment unit 'smoke' that Schefferus discusses probably also referred to a group of households or families who, together, were responsible for the tax from a limited land area. This term was used that way both in Bottenvika's farming villages, where it must have referred to parts of an agricultural settlement, and in the lappmarks where it included trapping and grazing areas in addition to fishing waters. In the Sámi areas, it is reasonable to interpret the taxation based on such 'smokes' as a forerunner of the tax land institution. 'Smoke' units are found in Torne lappmark from the 1640s.⁸¹ From Jämtland and Härjedalen, the

⁷⁹ Schefferus 1956, 62–63.

⁸⁰ Arell 1977, 68.

⁸¹ Rasmussen 2002. Most likely, the term *rök*, signifying 'smoke,' which appears as a taxation unit already from the fifteenth century, originally referred to a group of people who shared the same household or hearth. In the Latin language edition of Schefferus' work *Lapponia*, the word is also rendered by *focus* 'fireplace' or 'hearth,' also with the meaning 'home.' Both the taxation unit *rök* and the corresponding concept *bue* 'bow' may have their origin in the taxation that the Karelians introduced during the Late Middle Ages in the inner part of northern Fennoscandia on behalf of Novgorod. In Russian, the corresponding designations are known as *luk* 'bow', and *dym* 'smoke, hearth', Wallerström

designation tax mountain (*skattefjell*) is found. Complete information about individual tax lands and who possessed them is not available until a cadastre (land inventory) was compiled in 1695 in connection with a tax reform. With this reform, however, the *siida* as a collective was turned into a taxation unit, and individual households or families became jointly responsible for the *siida*'s total tax amount. This inventory from 1695 established the pattern for tax collection through the first half of the eighteenth century, but sheds little light on earlier taxation principles.

In order to assess whether the Sámi's individual tax lands corresponded to what we today would call property rights, one must first examine how Sámi possession turned out relative to the Swedish land ownership system and its alternative property forms. Through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the legal history discussion on the Swedish side has concentrated primarily on what character the Sámi freedom of use had relative to the three so-called categories of land that existed within the Swedish legal system. This threefold division of property categories had its origins in the Middle Ages:

- crown lands (Swedish *kronojord*): land, farms and common lands owned by the crown (the state);
- privileged or tax-exempted land, (Swedish *frälsejord*): land belonging to the nobility and exempted from taxation, due to privileges granted the nobility;
- tax land or taxable land: land owned by farmers themselves, who were obliged to pay ordinary taxes to the crown.

The two latter designations arose from medieval taxation practice and the privileges that the nobility enjoyed by exemption from taxes on their property. Lands that the nobility owned or had been given disposition over were exempted or 'saved' from ordinary tax. This implied that the Swedish crown did not receive taxes directly from the nobility's tenant farmers. Yet, it was up to the nobility whether it still wanted to collect and pocket the taxes from the tenant farmers that would otherwise have gone to the state, together with the actual land rent and other fees that

1995. While *bow/luk* originally seems to have referred to a group that worked together hunting and trapping, a 'tent group' or 'hunting group', the term *rök* was always attached to the use of land and water. All the same, over time the taxation unit *bow* came to be connected with land possession, as can be seen from the Russian "Alaj Mikhalkov's Land Register" from 1608–11 (Kharuzin 1890).

followed from the tenant relationship.⁸² On the contrary, taxable land (*skattejord*) was land that was neither owned by the nobility nor the crown, and for which the farmers themselves paid taxes directly to the state. The freeholders on such land, strictly speaking, were called tax farmers (*skattebønder*). Such ‘taxable land’ was what came closest to what in other countries was termed proprietorship or freehold. In contrast to the other landed property categories, there were relatively few limitations on the freedom that tax farmers enjoyed over their lands. Within the Swedish system, therefore, payment of taxes directly to the state became a strong indication of ownership, and herein lies an essential difference compared to the legal systems of other countries. In Norway, one cannot draw the same conclusions from the payment of taxes itself, since both proprietors and tenants paid the usual taxes to the king, both a conscription tax and a land tax.

Posed within the context of the Swedish landed property system of that era, the question therefore arises whether the Sámi’s relationship to their tax land can be put on an equal footing with the private tax farmers’ relationship to their farms. Was the taxation of the Sámi also based on landed possession, as in the case of the tax farmers? Does this imply that the Sámi must be regarded as having had a tax man’s right (*skattemannarätt*) on par with the farmers, with the only difference being that their land was used for hunting, fishing and reindeer herding? We will now look closer at how these questions have been addressed by scholars.

5.3.3 *The Views of the Legal Historians*

In a dissertation dating from 1922, “On The Lapp Tax-Land Institution and its Historical Development,” the Swedish legal historian Åke Holmbäck drew a negative conclusion with regard to Sámi property rights. Nevertheless, he went far in acknowledging that the Sámi must have had strong usufructuary rights to their tax lands, and he pointed to early sixteenth-century evidence which showed that the Sámi, by old custom, used certain lands and specifically-named fishing waters within *siida* territory. In spite of the fact that the division into various tax lands had most

⁸² This differed from Norway, where all the peasants on farms registered in the official land cadastres paid taxes directly to the state, regardless of whether they were proprietors or tenant farmers without their own property. Moreover, in Norway, the nobility’s tax exemption was much more restricted and limited for the most part to their main residences. Tenant farmers on Norwegian noble estates thus paid the same state tax as did other farmers.

probably been done by the Sámi themselves, he claimed that the crown officials had used the system as a means to tax the Sámi and had thereby further developed it.

According to Holmbäck, an individually taxed Sámi had exclusive right of usufruct to his land areas, with legal protection against it being used by other Sámi that was respected by the courts. All the same, in his opinion there could be no comparison between the Sámi right to tax lands and the tax man's rights of the farmers. Here, he focused on the question of whether tax land could be inherited. In fact, the Sámi often went to the district courts in order to have such matters of inheritance confirmed. The fact that the Sámi turned to a public court for such an issue indicated that it was not a question of normal inheritance in a private legal sense, but rather a conveyance that the judge at the district court was entitled to implement. Erik Solem, a Norwegian legal historian, however, has pointed out that this practice can be understood as the local courts taking over duties which had earlier or in other ways been subjected to the *süda* collective or *süda* institutions. Similar to the way the collective institutions of the East Sámi *südas* had approved the distribution of family areas, the district courts may have also had this kind of authority in the western lappmarks, following the introduction of Swedish administration and jurisdiction.⁸³ In this case, it is important to remember that the Sámi on the Swedish side made up a majority of the local juries (Swedish *nämnden*) at district courts.

Holmbäck's remaining arguments concerned the Sámi's inability to withstand intervention from the government authorities. He showed that the Swedish state had the right to allow men to clear new land (*nyodlingsmän*) to settle within the boundaries of the *süda* territory, which the Sámi were unable to prevent. In addition, a royal decree from 1683 on forest administration prescribed that the widespread forests outside of the settlements should be separated and left aside for the benefit of the crown. In Holmbäck's view, this made it completely impossible for the Sámi to claim any property rights to tax lands. When the settled colonizers, who undoubtedly had property rights to their farmsteads, could not even oppose the state's interference in this area, how could the Sámi be able to defend a presumed property right that had never been generally acknowledged—especially when taking into consideration that they only used their land for grazing, fishing, and hunting? Even though

⁸³ Solem 1933/1970, 89.

the Sámi's rights to such lands may have been strong earlier, the result of the authorities' interference at the end of the seventeenth century necessarily led to the conclusion that "Lapland became . . . the king's and the crown's land," with the exception of the individual farms that had been established there.

In the doctoral dissertation, "On the Sámi's Legal Position in Sweden-Finland," however, Finnish legal historian K. Korpjaakko-Labba drew a positive conclusion with regard to the Sámi's property rights to their tax lands.⁸⁴ Based on an analysis of the archive material, she maintains that the Sámi's relationship to their individual resource areas stands out as a tax man's right, bearing the same characteristics as the farmers' rights. Compared to the three land categories in the Swedish system, the Sámi possessions display a clear 'tax' character, thus coming as close as possible to actual property rights as they were conceived of in that period.

The goal of Korpjaakko-Labba's investigation is, first, to survey the Sámi's own understanding of the rights to land and water in the past, and then, to evaluate how these issues interacted with the Swedish-Finnish legal system of that time. The basis is a broad analysis of archive material from the five northernmost lappmarks,⁸⁵ in addition to a detailed investigation of the court assize minutes for the Rounala *siida* in Torne lappmark from the period 1639–1734. Korpjaakko-Labba's reasoning is structured around five points:

- With regard to the Sámi's own legal conceptions, she finds that the Sámi treated the separate tax lands (consisting of fishing waters, forestlands, and grazing lands) as their own property, and that they acted in accordance with this, as far as it is possible to reconstruct from documented expressions in the legal cases.⁸⁶
- The separate tax lands were defined by permanent borders in the open country, and thereby appear as clearly delimited, named objects for rights. Alongside the individual tax lands, there were also areas that could be exploited by several users and thus, more or less, constituted common lands within the *siida*.⁸⁷
- In terms of the judicial system, the individual holders of tax lands had legal protection that did not differ from normal property rights. In the

⁸⁴ Korpjaakko-Labba 1988, Swedish edition 1994.

⁸⁵ Ume, Pite, Lule, Torne and Kemi lappmarks.

⁸⁶ Korpjaakko-Labba 1988, Swedish edition 1994, 314.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 334.

- case of attempts of encroachment by others, the district court applied the same legal rules as in the cases concerning the farmers on tax farms, i.e., the regulations stipulated in Swedish national law from 1442.⁸⁸
- With regard to actual disposal and access to inheritance, Korpijaakko-Labba finds that there was a strong feeling that the land areas belonged to the family, and in cases concerning inheritance rights, general legal regulations were also followed. In spite of the fact that land did not appear as a commodity in this period, tax land was nevertheless conveyed to others, and the individual holder of tax land was then considered to have full freedom of action ('authority') to carry out such conveyances.⁸⁹
 - The tax the Sámi paid was actually a tax based on possession of land and was dependent on the size of the usage area which the individual disposed of, similar to the tax farmers. In any case, there can be no doubt that this was the case following a tax reform carried out by the Swedish King Karl IX in 1602.

Based both on the Sámi's own conceptions and the practice of the district courts, Korpijaakko-Labba therefore concludes that Sámi tax land was treated in exactly the same way as the holdings of the Swedish tax farmers. In other words, the Sámi had a tax man's right of the same character as the farmers, and with regard to the three land categories, Sámi possessions had a clear 'tax' character.

In spite of the fact that her results are well-founded and we can assume they are valid for the period ca. 1630–1730, questions can still be raised: for example, is the validity limited by time and place, in the sense that this emanates from a special Sámi livelihood in combination with Swedish administrative measures during a definite period? We therefore need to look at the Swedish tax reforms from the beginning of the seventeenth century and on the development of the tax lands in the following period, which partly differed from the previous pattern.

5.3.4 *Karl IX's Tax Reform in 1602*

There is reason to stress the significance of Karl IX's tax reform of 1602. It may have contributed to making permanent a land classification that had previously been more changeable, and to strengthening the attachment

⁸⁸ Ibid., 276.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 315.

between families and specific lands by making the users responsible for the tax on an individual basis. The decree clearly used a sort of possession principle as its starting point, by asserting that for all lappmarks there should be established registers of all “fishing waters, streams, and lakes” that existed in every *süda*, with exact information about who used those water courses. The Sámi’s livelihoods were defined as the only legal ones above the lappmark border, and all Sámi should be guaranteed an adequate area for exercising their livelihoods. At the same time, the wording of the decree shows a strong will to regulate and create stability in the Sámi’s land usage, in that they hereafter were supposed to “build and dwell” where it had been decreed based on the registration:

In this way, the Lapps are hereafter supposed to pay taxes to Sweden’s crown. The tax the Lapps have paid until now shall be terminated. And in all the lappmarks it shall be recorded how many people there are, men and women, married and unmarried, women and children, and that shall happen annually.

It shall be recorded how many fishing waters, streams, and lakes there are in each lappmark, and who up to the present has used them, name after name. Thereafter the census shall be compared with the waters and the lakes, and they shall be distributed according to the census, so that no one can gain control of more fishing waters and lakes than they can use. And now that the lappmarks have been so justly distributed among the census units, wise men shall be appointed who without violence and force shall distribute the land among the Lapps. And they shall be taxed for the fishing waters and lakes in the way that is here stipulated. And no Lapp shall be given the right to move about in the land as they have done up to now, but everyone may build and live where he is ordered and use the fishing waters, forest and land there by the grace of God...⁹⁰

Thus, we cannot exclude the possibility that the strong stability and individual disposal of tax lands in the following period is partly due to this reform, in which tax was expressly tied to land usage with registration of fixed usage areas. Recent research also implies that the tax unit ‘smoke’—meaning several joint, taxpaying households—was introduced into the taxation of the Sámi as a result of the tax reform of 1602.⁹¹ Since the Sámi’s disposal over land and water assumed other juridical forms in areas that were subject to other states’ administration, for example in Denmark-Norway, there is good reason to ask whether the influence

⁹⁰ Decree concerning the tax the Lapps shall pay. Dated Löfånger, 4 March, 1602. Waaranen vol. I, 1863, 276–277, n. 169.

⁹¹ Rasmussen 2002.

from Swedish administrative practice might in fact have been decisive in these matters.⁹²

The relatively permanent partitioning into individual tax lands might also have been well received by the Sámi in the Swedish lappmarks at this time, given the special occupational adaptation that existed among these inland Sámi throughout the last half of the seventeenth century and the first half of the eighteenth century. They based themselves on an early, intensive form of reindeer herding based on dairy husbandry, which did not require the long distance seasonal migrations that became common later, and which could be combined with hunting and fishing in nearby areas. In such a situation, the Sámi users may have accommodated themselves to a taxation system which affirmed their individual usage rights to particular areas.

The stability that characterized the tax land classification up to ca. 1730 stands in clear contrast to the unrest and the conflicts of the following period, that, in time, led to a comprehensive restructuring of the tax land system. Both Filip Hultblad and Nils Arell have pointed out how the number of disputes concerning the utilization of the tax lands increased markedly during the 1730s and 1740s.⁹³ In Torne lappmark at this period, it was mainly Sámi who sued each other because of internal disputes over grazing areas, fishing waters, and borders of the tax lands. At the end of the seventeenth century and up to 1710, however, conflicts with new settlers dominated the land usage cases.⁹⁴ In Jokkmokk, the development led to a partitioning of the older tax lands so that one landholder would be able to have tax land spread out at several locations.⁹⁵ This development was clearly caused by structural changes in livelihood, since reindeer nomadism developed further with larger reindeer herds that, in time, grew beyond the established tax lands' grazing capacity. The result was a restructuring of the tax lands and a reorganization of the old *siida* territories into long and narrow Lapp villages (*lappbyar*) dictated by the needs of seasonal migration (see fig. 57).

In the last half of the eighteenth century, the tax land system was also affected by political and administrative measures on the part of

⁹² There exists a certain parallel in the Russian authorities' taxation of individual Sami family areas on Kola, in different bow (*bue*) shares. Yet as we have seen, collective Sami social systems played a far greater role in approving the distribution of family areas.

⁹³ Hultblad 1968; Arell 1977.

⁹⁴ Arell 1977, 117, 127, 145–159, 255.

⁹⁵ Hultblad 1968, 88–91.

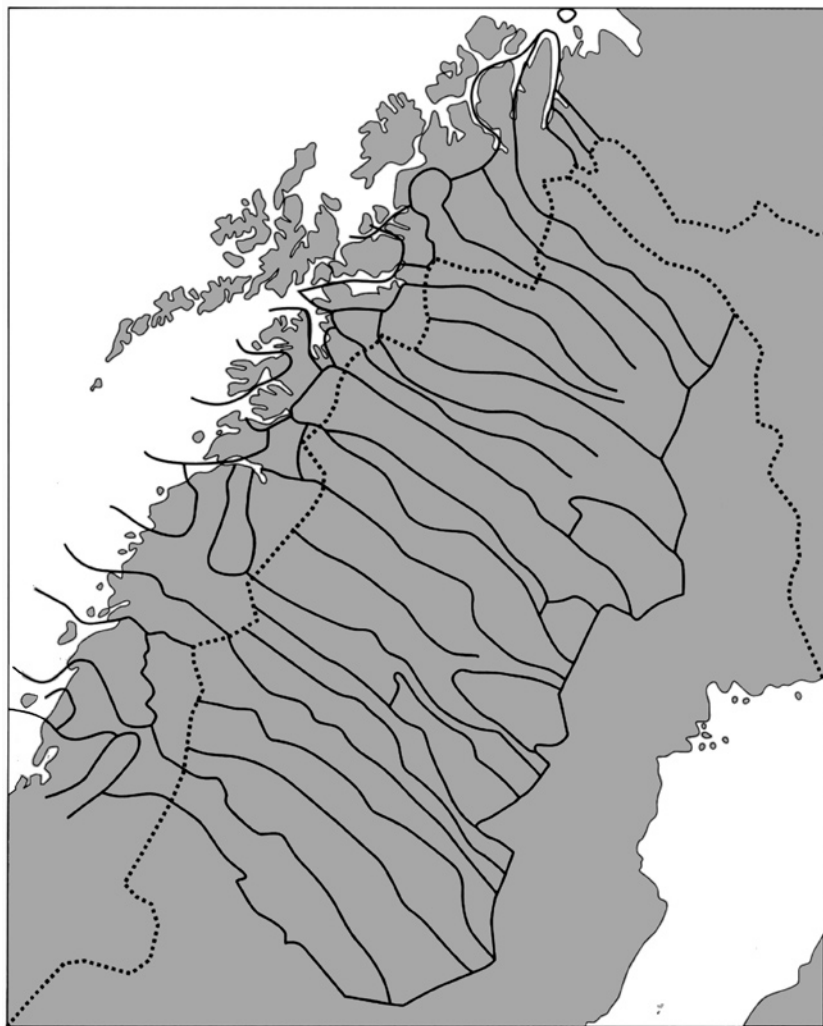


Fig. 58. The expansion of reindeer nomadism led to territorial changes resulting in the long and narrow, east-west oriented siida territories we know from later time. (Drawn anew on the basis of the original in Vorren 1980.)

governmental authorities. At the middle of the century, it seems as if a number of tax land-owners sought to adapt to the drawing of the borders in 1751 by concentrating their tax land areas on the Swedish side, based on the principle in the Lapp Codicil that no Sámi could own tax land in more than one state. Thus, a number of re-registrations of tax land occurred.⁹⁶ Towards the end of the eighteenth century, land usage disputes no longer concerned individual tax land-owners to the same extent as before, but most often were collective initiatives with entire villages as parties.⁹⁷ Another cause contributing to the reduced number of individual conflicts was a change in the jurisdictional and administrative practices on the Swedish side, caused by a jurisdictional conflict between the district courts and the highest administrative authority, the county governor. While the Sámi wanted to bring their disputes before the district courts, based on a new instruction for the Lapp tax collectors from 1760, the county governor claimed that these cases should now be decided by the administration. The handling of the tax land cases, therefore, was moved from the courts to the county administrative board (*länsstyrelsen*).⁹⁸

A legal title for the agricultural colonization that would later occur in the Swedish lappmarks came with a decree of 1673, the lappmark statute (*Lappmarks-plakatet*). The Swedish national government was of the opinion that the lappmarks covered large areas that the Sámi were unable to utilize efficiently, given their occupational adaptation. On the contrary, these lands might serve as meadows, pastures, and hunting areas for new settlers, so that the population in the lappmarks could increase. The motivation given was:

Just as well as the Lapps may be supported with an adequate instruction for their souls' salvation, and the land itself should be settled and cultivated by more inhabitants, and that [land], which now lies desolate and unused, through this can be made useful and developed to our and the nation's profit, in particular by Swedish and Finnish tenants, who may use or know how to benefit from the soil—of which the Lapps according to the nature of their livelihood now can make no use or benefit for themselves—and who are able to use it for meadowlands and pastures along with other scanty fodder from forests, streams, and lakes; as well as the advantage that can be expected by establishing a considerable number of mines in the same place...⁹⁹

⁹⁶ Päiviö 2001, 14, 54–62.

⁹⁷ Arell 1977, 255.

⁹⁸ Päiviö 2001, 15, 42, 127.

⁹⁹ Cited in Arell 1979, 7 (authors' translation).

The decree thus launched a 'parallel theory' for how the utilization of resources in the lappmarks could be managed. It was assumed that Sámi and new settlers could get along within the same area, because they were making use of different resource niches. It was also assumed that the Sámi could subsist primarily on reindeer herding, while the new settlers were going to make their way with animal husbandry combined with hunting and fishing. The desire to contribute to population growth in the lappmarks must be seen against a background of the new mining industry, which—in the spirit of mercantilism—was introduced into the lappmarks during the seventeenth century.

In the middle of the 1630s, deposits of silver were detected at Nasafjäll in the high mountain regions of Pite lappmark. This led to twenty-five years of mining activity. In the 1650s, copper mines were established at Svappaara in Jukkasjärvi. A decade later, the extraction of silver began in Lule lappmark, with mines in Kedkevarre and smelting works in Kvikkjokk.¹⁰⁰ Mining and open-pit mining operations were completely dependent on reindeer transport by the Sámi for bringing wood to the mines and ore to the smelteries, which often lay a good distance from the places of extraction. Yet, the onerous obligations that were imposed on the Sámi led to strong reactions and unrest, and many sought to get away from the mining areas and move over to adjoining lappmarks.¹⁰¹ Government policy, therefore, had a twofold aim: on the one hand, it sought to persuade the Sámi to remain in their traditional occupation, based on the recognition that if there were no reindeer, there would be no mines. Through other decrees, it sought to exhort the Sámi to "remain at their residences and not move from one place to the other." However, it was not the nomadic seasonal migrations the government sought to prevent, but more permanent migrations such as those to the Norwegian side.¹⁰² On the other hand, the government desired to stimulate population growth by giving advantages to new settlers: they were exempted from taxes for the first fifteen years and from conscription into the military as well.

The lappmark decree's greatest significance was that, in principle, it opened Sámi areas to agricultural colonization. The bulk of this colonization, however, came in the following centuries, with an even clearer colonization policy from the Swedish state. The decree did not immedi-

¹⁰⁰ Awebro 1988, 6–11; Anderzén 1992, 42.

¹⁰¹ Högsgröm 1980, 86; Arell 1979, 5.

¹⁰² Arell 1979, 6.

ately lead to any great number of settlers. Apparently, in the southern lappmarks, there was no surplus population that was inclined to take up new farms, and in Torne lappmark, some newly-cleared farms had already been established in the 1660s. In the 1670s and 1680s, however, new settlers began clearing land in Enontekis and Jukkasjärvi in response to the decree. In 1695, a new and revised decree was published that enjoined the duty for settlers to cultivate and prohibited them from “excess slashing and burning.”¹⁰³ Evidently, this amendment sought to protect woodland that was regarded as valuable by the Swedish government from the effects of the traditional slash-and-burn cultivation practiced by Finnish colonists.

5.3.5 *Sámi Allodial Property—a Possibility for Sámi Autonomy*

In the Norwegian legal system, there was no institution corresponding to tax land. With the exception of inner Finnmark, which before 1751 was under Swedish jurisdiction, no impact from this decree can therefore be found on the present Norwegian side. In order to decide what sort of legal protection Sámi usage forms had, we must instead study how the Sámi fared relative to distinctively Norwegian institutions such as the land ownership system (the leasing system) and the right to use common lands. The general tendency was that the authorities attended to agricultural interests and made conditions favorable for Norwegian farm holders and fisherman-farmers who sought to utilize resources for a combination of farming, domestic animal keeping, and fishing. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, though, the authorities' policy was not as consistent as it later came to be during the nineteenth century. From time to time, it contained decrees that went to some lengths to ensure that the Sámi were able to carry out their traditional livelihoods. We are first going to delve into the conditions for the coastal Sámi and focus upon the institution that the authorities called the Sámi allod (*finneodel*).

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, some of the coastal Sámi dwelling places in Troms and Nordland were exempted from land rent, which was ordinarily paid by tenant farmers. In northern Norway, as in the rest of the country, land was largely owned by great landowners, either by the crown directly or by people and institutions that had been granted land from the king as ‘fiefs,’ i.e., they benefited from the income

¹⁰³ Arell 1977, 1979; Korpijaakoo–Labba 1994, 384–390.

in return for taking care of certain duties or governing functions for the crown. Especially after the Reformation, when the Catholic Church's landed properties were confiscated by the crown, this was a normal method of paying the officials of the state and the new Lutheran state church. This often applied to nobles who filled positions in the regional administration. From the Middle Ages, some old noble estates had also been preserved, which had been passed on to the descendants through inheritance. Thus, the large majority of farmers in the country were tenant farmers who had to lease the farm or holding they were cultivating and pay an annual rent to the land owner. To rent or hire a piece of land in this way was called 'to lease' a farm. When concluding a lease agreement, one also had to pay a special entrance fee, called a first lease (*førstebygsel*). The property owner had the leasehold rights, i.e., the authority to rent out to whomever he wanted, even if most common was a heritable lease in which the tenancy was taken over by some of the children. Only in a few inner valleys in Østlandet was there a significant element of freeholding ('self-ownership'), meaning the farmers themselves owned the farm they cultivated, entirely or in part.

Some of the places and farms used by the coastal Sámi were thus exempt from such rental fees. That implied that these Sámi did not have to deal with any landowners and that they themselves could decide who should occupy the farm or take it over when the previous user died or moved. These farms, or Finn clearings as they were called, had not been assessed for any fixed amount of rent, nor been included in the official land cadastres (the property registers). In this way, they were exempt from the normal land ownership system, and Sámi users could not be driven away from the farms because of debt demands. A source from 1723 compared the system to the Norwegian institution of allodial property (*odel*):

... which the Finns and their children have kept as their allodial property, and which has never been passed on or been exchanged, bought or sold, regardless of how indebted the Finns have left their dwelling, but the farm has been taken over by the eldest son when [such] has existed, or by the eldest daughter or her husband, when there has not been a son; and when there has [neither] been any of these, the farm has partly lain fallow for a few years—without there having been paid the least tax to the king—until others of the Finns have come and deemed themselves as allodial owners and taken up the farm anew.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁴ The land register draft of 1723 for Ofoten.

The comparison with Norwegian allodial rights may perhaps seem striking, since the allodial institution was originally developed within Norwegian agrarian society. With the fee exemption that was included in the Sámi allod, these Sámi users actually came out on an equal footing with what otherwise would have been called 'lease-controlling freeholders on properties with allodial rights.' When the Danish-Norwegian civil servants around 1700 designated the institution as Sámi allod, it was therefore quite appropriate. Moreover, it must be emphasized that this exemption from the general land leasing system had nothing to do with the usual taxes that both Sámi and Norwegians had to pay to the state (the crown), regardless of whether they resided on tenant farms or not. In contrast to the Swedish side, payment of ordinary state taxes did not provide any special title to land within the Norwegian system. Thus, those occupying the Sámi allodial farms still had to pay such taxes, just as the Sámi who did not occupy such farms, and in the same way as Norwegian tenant farmers and proprietors. The designations and rates for the state taxes were nevertheless different for the two ethnic groups. While the Norwegians paid land tax and conscription tax (*leidang*), the Sámi paid Finn tax, and from 1614–15, the so called Finn conscription (*finneleidang*).¹⁰⁵ Such Sámi clearings with special allodial rights at the beginning of the seventeenth century are found all along the coast from Beiarn in the south to Kvaenangen in the north.

With the exception of a few areas with special nobility rights, there was no private landed property in Finnmark before 1775. Therefore, the concept of Sámi allod was unknown here, since there was no land leasing to be exempted from. Judging from some royal decrees issued in the first decade of the seventeenth century, it seems likely that the institution was introduced in connection with the Kalmar War (1611–13).¹⁰⁶ This might also have been a confirmation of older privileges, because already in the 1590s there was a tradition according to which the coastal Sámi in Nordland and Troms were supposed to have received certain privileges in olden times, from a certain King Hagen who was not identified more precisely.¹⁰⁷ The introduction or confirmation immediately after the war

¹⁰⁵ The Norwegian *leidang* tax had its origin in the medieval conscription obligations, which had been converted to a tax. In northern Norway, it was regularly paid in stockfish, while the so called 'land tax' was paid in money, at various rates, dependent on the individual taxpayer's social position.

¹⁰⁶ Norske Rigs-registranter, vol. III, 1865, 643.

¹⁰⁷ This tradition probably had its origin in knowledge about the agreement which the Norwegian King Haakon and 'the Finn King' Martin concluded at a meeting in Bergen

can be considered as a measure from the Danish-Norwegian government to attach the coastal Sámi more closely to Danish-Norwegian side. The government also seems to have harbored some doubt about the coastal Sámi's loyalty when dealing with Swedish claims. In the years before the outbreak of war, some of the coastal Sámi who had lived on the islands along the coast were driven away, because the authorities wanted to prevent the Swedish tax collectors from having an excuse to visit them. On the other hand, the coastal Sámi were forced to temporarily move out of the fjords in South Troms during the war because they were regarded as a security risk in case the Swedes sent troops to the inner fjord areas.

When the national government in this way granted the coastal Sámi special status for some of their dwelling places, it was counter to the interests of the local Norwegian population and authorities. After 1600, the most lucrative period for the fisheries and the trade exchange via Bergen was finished, and the Norwegian population turned away from specialized fishing and sought subsistence possibilities in which fishing could be combined with domestic animal keeping and farming. As a result, they moved from the outer coast inward into the fjords. The traditional coastal Sámi areas, therefore, came under pressure from Norwegian farmers who wanted to lease farms in the fjords.

In terms of Norwegian law, there were two ways to regard the coastal Sámi dwellings: some could be understood as separations from Norwegian-owned, registered, and assessed farms in the vicinity that belonged to the crown or church. In that case, the property relationship was supposed to be transferred from these farms. Yet, other dwelling places might be considered as clearings on common land, and then, according to old Norwegian common land rights, it was the crown that became the owner. In both cases, these landowners (the crown or the church) were supposed to have the right to lease out the clearings to whomever they wanted, for example, to land-seeking Norwegian farmers. In this context, the institution of Sámi allod can be considered as a legal compromise: on the one hand, the Sámi received protection for their traditional practices; on the other hand, the areas still had a sort of common land status, so that Norwegian farmers obtained permission to make use of these places on a temporary basis in case the Sámi were not interested or were absent for a few years.¹⁰⁸

in 1313, although the precise content of this agreement is unknown (Bratrein 2001; see chapter 4.5).

¹⁰⁸ Hansen 1986, 43–45.

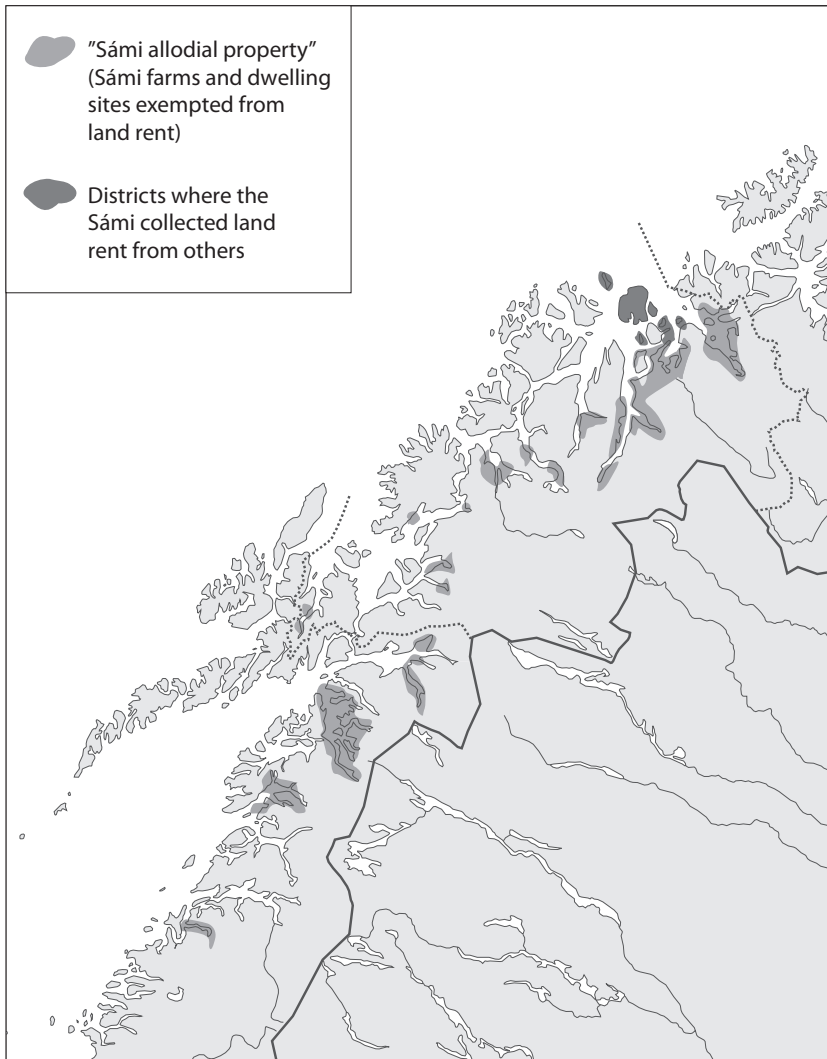


Fig. 59. The distribution of "Sámi allodial property" and Sámi clearings (based on results from Bjørklund 1982, Bratrein 1989, Følling Holtet 1971, Hansen 1986, Hauglid & Minde 1980, Kolsrud 1947, Nielssen 1990 and Pettersen 1988).

In fact, the Sámi allod seems to have given the Sámi effective legal protection against pressure from Norwegian farm interests as long as the institution was in force. An investigation from South Troms shows that the Sámi, resting their case on Sámi allodial rights, could have Norwegians who had taken up these farms on a temporary basis evicted and could resume occupation of these farms.¹⁰⁹ To be sure, it happened that the Sámi from time to time saw themselves better served by moving away from the farms and seeking their livelihood elsewhere, in connection with the shifting economic conditions within the fisheries and the Bergen trade. In such cases, Norwegians were allowed to harvest the resources temporarily. If the Sámi wished to return, the Norwegians had to yield. The rights to the individual farms, though, do not seem to be so closely connected to the nearest family, as with Norwegian allodial rights. To be sure, the son inherited from the father in several cases, but we also find several examples of Sámi moving between the different farmsteads and changing residences among themselves. This indicates that the Sámi allodial rights were allotted to a greater collective, in which different kinship relationships could be mobilized and one did not have to wait for inheritance settlements or other types of conveyance to be able to assert one's rights. In other words, it appears that the rights were held jointly by a sort of *siida* community.

5.3.6 *The Abolition of the Sámi Allod*

The Sámi allodial system, however, did not stay intact very long. It was cancelled in South Troms (the fief of Senja) as early as 1661, through a simple administrative decision. Thereafter, dwellings that had earlier been exempted were now entered into the public land register. Thus, they were incorporated into the ordinary land ownership system and could be leased out to anyone, Norwegians as well as Sámi. The consequences were not long in appearing either; in the course of two to three decades, Norwegian settlers had established themselves on all the clearings with earlier allodial status. It is doubtful whether the Sámi protested against the cancellation. But regardless, it provoked a certain mobility among the Sámi in relation to their customary dwelling sites. Some of the younger generation seem to have moved out and sought subsistence elsewhere,

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

partly in the neighboring areas and partly as far away as Varanger, where they engaged in fishing.

In Nordland and North Troms, the system remained in force somewhat longer, up to the middle of the eighteenth century. The final, formal abolition occurred after an order from the Chamber College (*Kammerkollegiet*) on March 31, 1759, which provided that the remaining Sámi clearings should be assessed and incorporated into the public land register like other tenant farms. By that time, the system had been undermined for a long time through sales and through successive assessment for rent. Pressure from Norwegian interests (both land-seeking fisherman-farmers and merchants with large amounts of capital) had slowly but steadily undermined the coastal Sámi's control of land rights. The development, though, took a somewhat different course in northern Nordland and North Troms. In Tysfjord, Hammarøy, and Ofoten, a number of Sámi clearings came into Norwegian hands through direct sale by the Sámi. This development picked up speed in the last decades of the seventeenth century and the beginning of the eighteenth century. In North Troms, Sámi clearings were successively and steadily being assessed by the authorities and leased out on the usual tenant farm conditions.

In connection with a comprehensive registration effort of all landed property in the 1660s, the authorities had also acquired an overview of the Sámi clearings in Nordland and North Troms through a sort of test assessment. In these areas, this assessment did not immediately lead to the coastal Sámi's rights being pushed aside. In the case of Nordland, the registration commission recommended that the dwelling places should keep their status, so that the coastal Sámi would be able to use them without paying any lease. In North Troms, the order to assess a number of farms was disregarded on the grounds that "their existence and conditions are very poor" (*deris Werelse och Wilkor er meget Ringe*). For the registration commission in North Troms, it appears to have been decisive what kind of livelihood the farms were subject to, or whether they had the potential to sustain the traditional Norwegian fisherman-farmer occupation.¹¹⁰

Nevertheless, nine Sámi allodial farms in Hamarøy had already been sold by the Sámi holders to permanent residents before 1667. Later in the century, this tendency gained momentum. In these cases, the coastal Sámi considered that they had full property rights to the farms and therefore could sell them to anybody. This led to a number of Norwegians with

¹¹⁰ Hauglid and Minde 1980.

ample resources, including merchants, getting hold of several Sámi clearings. However, in connection with a renewed registration effort in 1723, this practice was stopped. This was partly caused by an initiative from the leader of the newly organized missionary activity towards the Sámi, Thomas von Westen, who wanted the Sámi to be able to keep their special rights and not feel neglected by Danish-Norwegian authorities. During the forthcoming border negotiations between Denmark-Norway and Sweden, it was important to assure the loyalty of as many of the Sámi as possible. In a letter read to the provincial court assembly at Steigen in 1724, von Westen emphasized that the Sámi “do not have the title to sell” the farms they occupy, and two years later he procured two governmental decrees that took the Sámi under protection and made adjustments in favor of the mission.¹¹¹ Here it says:

Inasmuch as it has been experienced that some of the Norwegian Subjects in Nordland make considerable encroachments and do injustice to the Finns and Lapps on the small farms, some of which they have cleared and taken up as dwellings since time immemorial, in the innermost part of the fjords at a few places where no Norwegian people have lived, without any seeds or agricultural production, since they nevertheless have been granted protection and privileges on the same places by previous kings.¹¹²

In the end, however, this did not suffice to halt the taking over of the Sámi clearings by Norwegians. Rather, it seems to have made the state, represented by the bailiff, more focused on claiming its interests. If the clearings lay deserted for a few years, they now risked being leased out to Norwegians. The last Sámi clearings in Tysfjord were assessed for rent and included in the land register as late as 1780.¹¹³

In North Troms, the abolition of the Sámi clearings occurred primarily through rent assessments. On the one hand, the local authorities seem to have pressed ahead in order to assess farms where the means of livelihood, in their opinion, had approached that of the Norwegian fisherman-farmers.¹¹⁴ On the other hand, some coastal Sámi themselves wanted their clearings assessed. Clearly, they considered formal assessment and leasing as a more secure protection against the increased pressure they experienced from immigrating Norwegians and Kvens.¹¹⁵

¹¹¹ Nielssen 1994, 149; Hansen 1986, 24, 133–135.

¹¹² Fogtman 1793, 604–607.

¹¹³ Nielssen 1994, 158.

¹¹⁴ Hauglid and Minde 1980.

¹¹⁵ Bjørklund 1982.

5.3.7 *The Reindeer-Herding Sámi and Norwegian Legislation
Concerning Common Lands*

In the eighteenth century, Norwegian legislation concerning common lands, as it was interpreted at the time by Norwegian farmers, property owners, and authorities, came to have certain implications for the legal situation of the Sámi reindeer nomads, especially in the bailiwicks of Helgeland and Tromsø (the northern and central parts of Troms county). Basing themselves on claims for property rights to the commons, individual landowners in Helgeland started a practice of leasing out mountain pastures to the nomads. This system of leasing lands (*bøxelland*), which did not occur outside Helgeland, had been significant for the formation of the Lapp Codicil's paragraph 2, which decreed that "No Lapp may hereafter own Tax- or Leasing-land in more than One State." In this case, an entirely local system was represented as being general.

In spite of strong private property interests that also existed in northern and central Troms, the common land question was interpreted differently in these parts and no leasing practice was developed. Nor did leasing happen in the intermediate regions (in northern Nordland and South Troms) where the crown still maintained control over common lands. These different outcomes must also be seen in connection with the policy conducted vis-à-vis the Sámi from the Danish-Norwegian side during and after The Great Northern War of the early eighteenth century. Before the border negotiations with Sweden, both states sought to win over as many Sámi groups as possible to their side. The governments tried their best to show that, in practice, the largest possible number of nomads had always been their own subjects. Thus it was important to be able to show that the nomads had paid taxes to local Danish-Norwegian authorities and leasing fees to Norwegian landowners, and that in addition they had attended religious services on the Norwegian side. Thus, the missionary work also played a central role in tying the migrating Sámi more strongly to Danish-Norwegian authorities. A closer examination will show how the common land legislation was adapted differently in various regions, and thus provide insight into how the legal situation of the reindeer-herding nomads was influenced by local conditions and the realities of power.

However, the question of rights pertaining to common land in northern Norway is not a simple one for several reasons. First, doubts have been raised as to whether common lands or so-called 'community common lands' actually existed in these regions in the same way as in southern Norway. Second, it is uncertain whether the common lands, to the extent

they existed and were recognized by the authorities, were included in the crown property that was sold in the 1660s. Regarding the first question, some legal historians have gone so far as to claim that common lands never existed in this part of the country. In particular, they have pointed out that the northern Norwegian settlement was based on the resources of the sea and the coastal landscape. Doubt has also been raised as to whether northern Norwegian communities had claimed rights to the isolated mountain ranges on a collective basis. Other scholars such as Absalon Taranger have maintained that there indeed were common lands in this part of the country, but that these common land features had disappeared over time, as a result of interference from the state and failure on the part of the settlement communities in maintaining their rights. Still others argue that common lands have existed from time immemorial and still do today.

It is important to bear in mind that the institution of common land, as it is known from older Norwegian law, was primarily developed within the framework of agrarian society and as an answer to its needs. Generally, it aimed at protecting the collective rights of established farms that needed to harvest the resources of outlying fields to supplement their basis for combined farming and animal husbandry. Common land rights had been developed in this way in southern Norway from the Early Middle Ages, and such rights to common land were strongly tied to the established settlement in the district communities. Only by possessing an established farm with full rights would one gain access to important additional resources in the common, outlying areas that were reserved for the peasants of the same community. Cotters and other members of the district community, who did not occupy officially registered farms, were excluded. Moreover, there was an obvious clash of interests between those who wanted to clear land for new farms on the district's common land and the tenant farmers on established, registered farms who wanted the common land preserved intact. However, during the Middle Ages, the king decreed that newly-cleared land would become crown property, meaning the men clearing new farms in the commons would become the king's tenant farmers and enjoy his protection. This can be understood as a policy of encouraging the cultivation of new land. For the king, it probably also reflected a desire to make land available for new farmers who could then be taxed.

This southern Norwegian legislation concerning the common lands was introduced into Trøndelag in 1260 by a supplement to the Frostathing law, which at that time probably also covered northern Norway. With

the national law of Magnus VI Lagabøte from 1274, these regulations were codified for the entire country. To be sure, the common lands of the Hålogalanders are mentioned in the sources at an early point in time. A royal legal amendment from the early twelfth century stipulated that the Hålogalanders shall enjoy the common lands as they had done in the days of St. Olaf.¹¹⁶ The general aim of this regulation was to return to a prior legal situation and rescind a number of special fees and royal privileges that the Danish king's regent in Norway had tried to introduce in the 1030s. At the same time, it was ascertained that the king should have exclusive rights to all fur trade. Beyond documenting that common lands actually existed in northern Norway in the Early Middle Ages, the amendment gives no information about the rules that were in force for their actual use. Nor do we know much about common land rights in this part of the country after the revisions of the thirteenth century.

With common land legislation having its roots in the needs of agrarian society and the state's general prioritizing of agricultural interests, the battle for common lands in the eighteenth century most often took its point of departure in the interests of the crown, private landowners, and those entitled to use the common lands (understood as the holders of established farms). In areas with both Norwegian and Sámi settlement, therefore, Sámi interests were taken into consideration only when there were permanent Sámi settlement on farms whose economic production corresponded to those on Norwegian farms; or alternatively, when questions could be raised about the status of Sámi clearings in areas that were considered common land, as with the Sámi allodial farms. Sámi use of common land areas that was not based on residence on stable farm units or clearings was not taken into consideration. Seasonal use of these areas, for example, in connection with reindeer herding, were understood as a kind of tolerated right of usufruct to areas where other users had stronger, more basic and 'real' rights. Conditions were quite different in regions settled exclusively by Sámi, such as East Finnmark. During the eighteenth century, it seems that Danish-Norwegian authorities accepted the Varanger Sámi's exclusive right to use the resources in their vicinity, a position that found some support in the common land legislation of the time.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁶ Norske middelalderdokumenter 1975, 20.

¹¹⁷ Kristensen 2001, 113.

Further south, in Nordland and Troms, however, the question about property rights in common lands came into focus, which also had implications for the legal situation of reindeer-herding nomads in certain areas. Early in the eighteenth century, a Norwegian landowner, Mrs. Sverdrup, introduced a practice of demanding lease payment for mountain areas that the reindeer-herding Sámi in Vefsn used for pasture.¹¹⁸ Prior to this, in the latter half of the seventeenth century, South Sámi reindeer herders occasionally had to pay leases for their grazing areas and 'tax mountains' to the Norwegian bailiffs.¹¹⁹ What was new with Mrs. Sverdrup's arrangement was that she systematized the process, that it was under the direction of a private Norwegian landowner and, in part, in close cooperation with the missionary activity towards the Sámi. The formal, legal context was that she had been commissioned with a number of properties in Helgeland that had earlier been crown property (*krongods*). With the exception of Finnmark, the state's properties and rights in northern Norway had been sold to private interests in the 1660s as part of the large crown property sales which were initiated in order to pay the state's debts after the wars with Sweden. In the first round, the northern Norwegian crown properties in their entirety were assigned to the Holstein magnate Joachim Irgens, who already was the sole owner of the Røros copper mine. Yet, because of fraud discovered at Irgens' death, most of the property and rights from 1682 were returned to the crown. This applied to the bailiwicks of Salten, Lofoten/Vesterålen, Andenes, and Senja. Farthest south and north, in the bailiwicks of Helgeland and Tromsø, the crown property sale provided the origin of extensive private property complexes, at the disposal of 'proprietors' (similar to gentry). Margrete Sverdrup held a small part of the Helgeland property that had been mortgaged by Joachim Irgens' widow to the Dutch baron Jakob de Petersen. The largest part of the Helgeland property (in all, 487 farms with 868 tenant farmers) had, nevertheless, been taken over by the prominent burgher and councilor in Trondheim, Lorentz Mortensen Angell.

When Mrs. Sverdrup simply usurped the authority to lease the mountain pastures to the Sámi, it was on the basis of the original royal deed of conveyance to Irgens from 1666. The specification of the properties sold

¹¹⁸ Early cases of leasing of mountain pastures occur in Vefsn in 1711 (Magnus 1944, 118) and in 1717 (Bergsland 1975, 291–293; 1999, 96).

¹¹⁹ Such leasing is known from Tynset 1661–63, Tydal 1657–60, and Overhalla 1691/1703 (Bergsland 1999, 66, 76, 79) together with Susendalen 1691/1708 (Kj. Jacobsen cited in Bergsland 1999, 96).

was very extensive. Not only did it comprise all rights stemming from land lordship, such as land rent, house rent, dues for participating in the fisheries, and tithes, it also included taxes of old and new origin, such as conscription, Finn tax, and Finn conscription, as well as the Lapp tax from the reindeer-herding nomads. In addition, the sale included:

...all other income, privilege, and treasure, whether (it) be from field, meadow, forest, land, fishing waters, and grazing pastures, hunting, or hunting grounds, mountains, hills, valleys and shore, wasteland and settled areas, wet and dry, within and outside the farm limits, and all other appurtenances which belong, have belonged from times immemorial, and rightfully ought to belong, in so far as we have been entitled, with absolutely no exception in any way ...¹²⁰

Although the common lands were not expressly mentioned in the deed of conveyance, Mrs. Sverdrup usurped a right to lease out parts of the unregistered land, similar to the way in which the king could lease out clearings in the common lands for farming purposes. Even though leasing of grazing areas had occurred earlier, it had not happened with the same regularity and not on the part of private landowners. When local and central authorities then accepted this private leasing practice, an underlying consideration was probably that this would involve the Sámi in more regular obligations towards Norwegian proprietors and authorities, and thus tie them more permanently to the Norwegian side.

To what extent the common lands had been included in the crown property sales of 1666 was, nevertheless, a disputed question both at the time and later. Right up to the present, legal historians have been split into two camps on this question.¹²¹ The skeptics have also raised doubts about whether the designation 'common land' (*allmenning*) was used for the high mountain areas in the past. Moreover, the border between Norway and Sweden in the area north of Trøndelag/Jämtland still had not been determined at the time when the crown property sales took place. Thus, how could the government sell rights to mountain areas where state sovereignty was not yet determined and was perhaps disputed? When the royal deed of conveyance contains the formulation 'in so far as we have been entitled,' perhaps it aims at caution on this point? Scholars have also pointed out that the only royal privilege vis-à-vis the

¹²⁰ Cited in Taranger 1892, supplement 1.

¹²¹ Taranger (1892), Tank (1928) and Coldevin (1943) claimed that the common lands were included in the crown property sales; Olafsen (1916) and Ræstad (1928), on the contrary, claimed that they were not.

reindeer-herding Sámi that is mentioned directly in the royal deed of conveyance, and which private landowners undoubtedly took over, was the right to collect the Lapp tax, a traditional personal tax. In addition, within the Norwegian system, such personal taxes did not give any particular authority or right of disposition over the property, in contrast to what was the case with the Swedish tax land institution. In Helgeland and in Salten, however, the Lapp tax had not been collected from the nomads since the beginning of the seventeenth century.¹²² However, when Mrs. Sverdrup began to collect fees in the beginning of the eighteenth century, the leasing fee was explicitly tied to the nomads' use of the actual mountain areas.

For further historical developments, though, the actual wording of the deed of conveyance had less significance than how the government (the Chamber of Revenues), the bailiffs, and the private landowners in practice interpreted the sale of crown property in 1666—from the actual situation they were in, with continued development of settlement and resource exploitation, and, not least, the accentuated relationship with Sweden during and after the Great Northern War. Through the entire period 1705–1750, the bailiff of Helgeland continued the traditional practice of leasing out farm clearings within the common lands (Rana and Vefsn). As in earlier periods, new farms were considered the crown's property and they were entered into the crown's land registers. The bailiff must have been of the opinion that the state still had the right of disposal over the common lands. Even if this understanding was disputed and met resistance from the county governor,¹²³ this was clearly the opinion of the Chamber of Revenues. In 1750, the Chamber sold the Helgeland common lands to the proprietor Petter Dass at Tjøtta, who had taken over the Angell property in 1738. With the sale followed the property rights to clearings in the commons, but an exception was explicitly made for the Lapp areas:

¹²² On the contrary, further north, as for example in South Troms, the state still collected the Lapp tax from the nomads after the crown property and the rights had been conveyed back to the state in 1682. From 1686 onwards, the tax on the nomads was regularly recorded in the accounts under the column "Finn and Lapp tax" (*Finde-og Lappeschatt*) together with the tax from the Sámi groups who were in the process of settling in the "outlying field areas" (*markebygdene*).

¹²³ In a letter from 1725, the chief administrative officer, Ove Schjelderup, claimed that the original royal deed of conveyance to Irgens was "so ample that neither any farm or common land is reserved to his Majesty" (Coldevin 1989, 35).

... but even, that the Lapps within the common lands enjoy the use of those places or areas, where no clearing can be undertaken or dwellers settle and likewise may acquire necessary firewood from the forests...¹²⁴

Seen from a modern property rights viewpoint, one was thus in the paradoxical situation that the old crown property in Helgeland was divided between two private proprietors, one of which had the right to lease out clearings for agricultural purposes in the commons, while the other had the right to lease out grazing areas to the Sámi on the same commons. Actually the common land areas had been split into two portions: on the one hand, the so-called Lapp areas, which could still be used by the Sámi, and on the other hand, those parts of the common lands that were open for new farm clearings. At the time, though, the situation need not have seemed so remarkable. According to a widespread property conception in previous times, different persons and groups might enjoy various rights of disposal over one and the same piece of property. In a forest area, for example, the right to cutting wood, the right to grazing, and the right to pick berries and fodder could be divided between different user groups. When in the Middle Ages, the monarchy took over ownership of the clearings on common lands, it did not at first pretend that it should 'own' the common lands as such, or deprive the district communities of their rights to harvest resources in outlying fields. The concept 'the king's common land' was introduced later. At first, both the king and those district peasants who were entitled to use the commons could each be said to 'own' rights to the common lands. The view that one of those having disposal held a title to the land which should be considered as more fundamental than other rights, and therefore constituted the key to 'actual ownership,' did not prevail until the nineteenth century under influence from German jurisprudence. Within the Norwegian landed property system, it was normal, too, that each individual farm had several owners, each of whom had the right to his or her share of the land rent. In the middle of the eighteenth century, therefore, it was not necessarily considered abnormal that several owners could have different rights of disposal over one and the same common land area.

Beyond the private landowners' interests, the institutionalization of the lease system vis-à-vis the Sámi must also be seen in light of the interstate dispute, as a measure that could strengthen the reindeer-herding

¹²⁴ For the investigation of the Lapps' conditions in Nordland county, see the Lapp Commission of 1892, supplement n. 2a.

Sámi's subject relationship to Denmark-Norway. In part, leasing can be construed as a direct countermove against the tax land institution on the Swedish side. In Helgeland, it is also clear that the leasing institution and the missionary efforts vis-à-vis the Sámi went hand in hand, especially after the Mission Collegium had been established in 1714 (see chapter 6). In 1717, missionaries arrived at Snåsa and Vefsn, and the same year the leasing system was extended over the watershed to areas where Swedish authorities claimed land interests from times immemorial and collected tax from the same Sámi groups.¹²⁵ For both states, it was a question of tying the nomads to their administration by getting them to attend church services on their own territory. Trade could be used for the same purpose. Thirty to forty years later, we see that Major Schnitler sought to revive the old Lapp markets on the Norwegian side and to institute completely new markets there in order to tie the Sámi closer to the Norwegian authorities through a combination of trade, tax collecting, and church attendance. In fact, he had noticed that there were extensive trade activities occurring at the central Sámi dwelling places in the interior, where the reindeer-herding Sámi were subject to Swedish jurisdiction both through secular law enforcement and church services.

From the nomads' point of view, the payment of fees that leasing implied may have seemed like a possible way to assure their rights over their traditional grazing areas by a title that Norwegian farmers and the Danish-Norwegian administration would accept. The 1750 deed of conveyance declared that the Sámi should be allowed to use everything outside those areas 'where permanent residents settle and make clearings,' and, at the same time, should be able to use the forests for firewood. When the Sámi accepted the leasing system, it could, therefore, be connected with their being under a certain pressure from Norwegian farmers: leasing therefore might have offered a suitable means of regulating conflicts that arose from clashes over the farmers' use of outlying fields, grasslands, and their dairy farming. Seen from a Norwegian point of view, lease payments implied that the nomads fully accepted that others had more basic rights to their usage areas. It is not clear to what extent the nomads understood the legal situation, and whether it was clear for them the subtle implications of whether the fee they paid on the Norwegian side was called 'tax' or 'lease.'¹²⁶

¹²⁵ Bergsland 1999, 96, 98, 102.

¹²⁶ Bergsland 1975, 292.

During the 1720s and 1730s, a bifurcation of the outlying field areas took place in the bailiwick of Tromsø as well, but under different conditions and with almost the opposite outcome of what happened in Helgeland. Here, no leasing of grazing areas was introduced, but instead a partition between two types of common lands was established from the 1730s on: the district common lands, which directly bordered the district communities, and the king's common which comprised the outlying areas towards the mountain ridge. This partition came about because of a conflict over the Sámi clearings or the Sámi allodial farms, which were considered clearings on the common lands.

This conflict began in relation to lands held in Troms by the Baron de Petersen. He had held the earlier crown estate until 1751, but similar to the Helgeland estate, it was controlled by a local manager. When in the 1720s and 1730s, it was time to assess the new Sámi clearings that had come into being since the crown property sale, confusion and disputes arose. Through the rent assessment, some clearings were added to the Baron's properties, while others became crown property on the grounds that the crown still had rights over the common lands. This provoked powerful protests from the baron's manager. Even though the rights over the common lands could be disputed, a private proprietor's rights to the Finn tax and the Finn conscription were clear and undisputed, according to the royal deed of conveyance from 1666. Yet when the Sámi clearings were being assessed, the Sámi lease holders were deleted from the special Finn censuses and taxed as ordinary tenant farmers, so that the proprietor lost income. In 1736, the district governor, Ove Schjelderup, intervened and formulated the division between the two types of common land into what were termed district common land and the king's common land. The following year, the Chamber of Revenues followed Schjelderup's distinction in the interpretation of the original royal deed of conveyance, and claimed that the district common lands must be regarded as having been sold in 1666, while the distant, isolated areas, such as the pine forest, were unsold and still belonged to the crown.¹²⁷ By distinguishing between two types of common lands in this way, the authorities managed to satisfy the baron's manager, and at the same time, the assessment of the Sámi clearings could proceed.

In 1751, the manager's son, the Trondheim burgher Johan Christian Hvid, bought the entire Troms estate. In the beginning, he tried to claim

¹²⁷ Hauglid 1981, 140.

that the common land areas in their entirety were included in the sale, but when that was not accepted by the authorities, he took the step ten years later of buying the common lands separately. The entire enormous area in inner Troms, from Malangen to Kvaenangen, was sold for 200 *riksdaler*.

In terms of the relationship between property rights of the state and of the private landowner, there were thus two widely differing solutions in Helgeland and in Troms. These solutions are illustrated in the description of the principles given in figure 59. In both cases, the legal point of departure was the old Norwegian common land right, but local power relationships, the policies of individual property owners, and the decisions of local administrative authorities led to different outcomes. From the reindeer-herding Sámi's point of view, the difference was perhaps not so great in practice. In both cases, they could still use the pastures in the outlying areas that were situated in higher areas, towards the mountains, and farthest away from settled communities and farm populations. The areas closer to established settlements were assigned for clearing and potential new farms. The one essential difference lay, however, in the fact that the nomads in Helgeland had to pay a lease for their use of the mountain grazing areas—and thus accept the private property owners' rights over the grazing areas—while in Troms, they could use them free of charge for the time being.

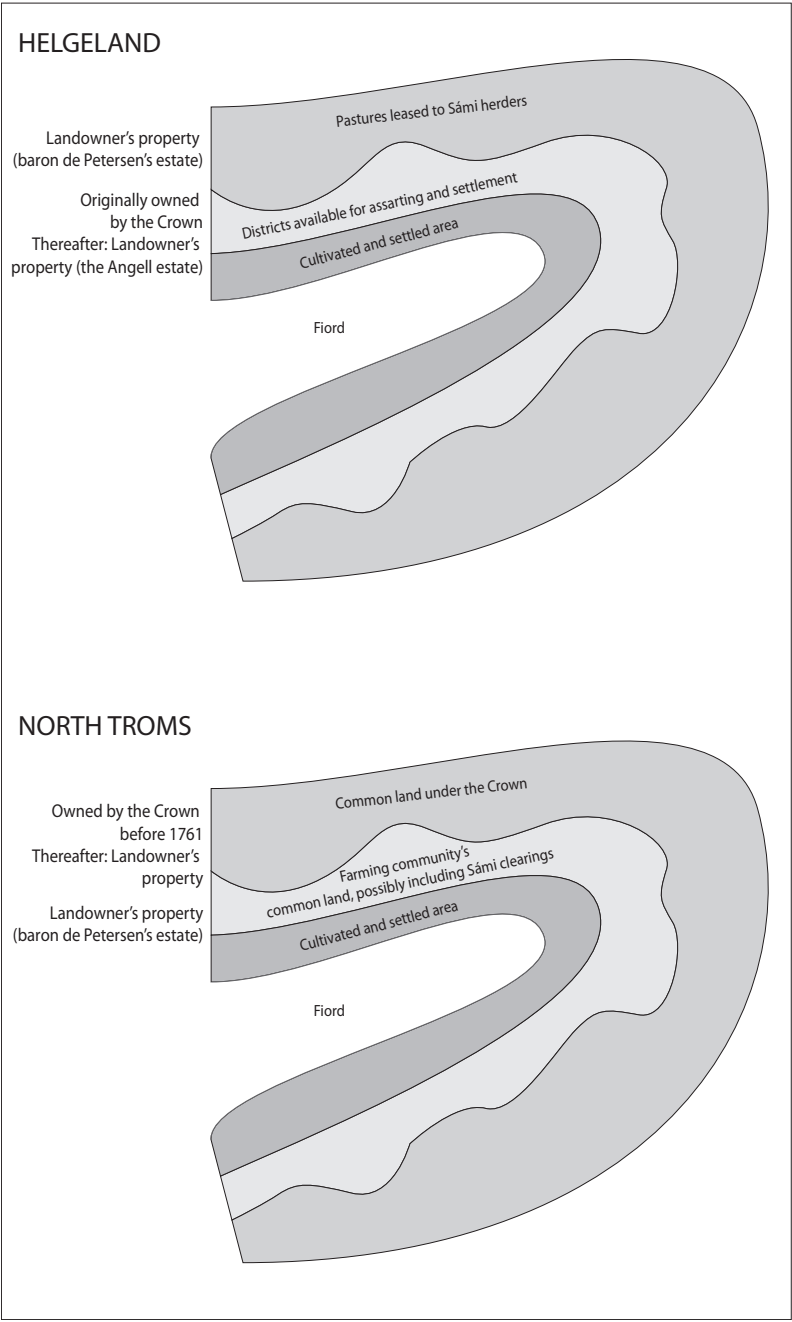


Fig. 60. Illustrative model of property relationships in outlying areas and “common land areas” in Troms and Helgeland.

CHAPTER SIX

MISSIONARIES AND SHAMANS: SÁMI RELIGION AND THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST IT

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Returning from his third journey to northern Norway in 1722–23, the Norwegian missionary Thomas von Westen, somewhat disheartened, reported that despite the ongoing campaign to christianize the Sámi, he had encountered “entire Sámi fjords without a single man refraining from sacrificing to the Devil; all mountains were Gods, all fields littered with pagan idols, every house and sod hut being a synagogue of Satan.” Notwithstanding von Westen’s despair, which retrospectively seems somewhat exaggerated, his remark points to crucial aspects which should be kept in mind when trying to reconstruct and synthesize pre-Christian Sámi religion. Religion or cosmology was not a secluded sphere of belief or sacredness but a repercussive field constantly enacted and embodied, and which permeated landscapes, dwellings, and everyday activities. Contrary to what constitutes the norm in our modern conception of religion, Sámi religion contained no holy texts or fixed liturgy, nor any hierarchical organization that could enforce the ‘right faith.’ Instead, religion was practiced and maintained through a bundled field of actions, myths, stories, and material manifestations. Even though Sámi shamans, the *noaidis*, played a leading role in the maintenance of the rites, they did not have a monopoly on cult ceremonies and sacrificial acts. These rituals could also be carried out by others, both in domestic settings and at sacrificial sites scattered around the landscape. This flexibility also made Sámi religion dynamic and open to individual interpretation.

This conception of religion had two important consequences. First, it led to significant variations in religious content and expression in the various parts of the Sámi area. Even though basic elements were common, actual expressions varied from region to region and over time. Second, the Sámi religion, on par with other ‘polytheistic’ religions, appeared as more tolerant and open vis-à-vis other religious manifestations, in the sense that it was able to incorporate foreign gods, symbols, and rites into a Sámi

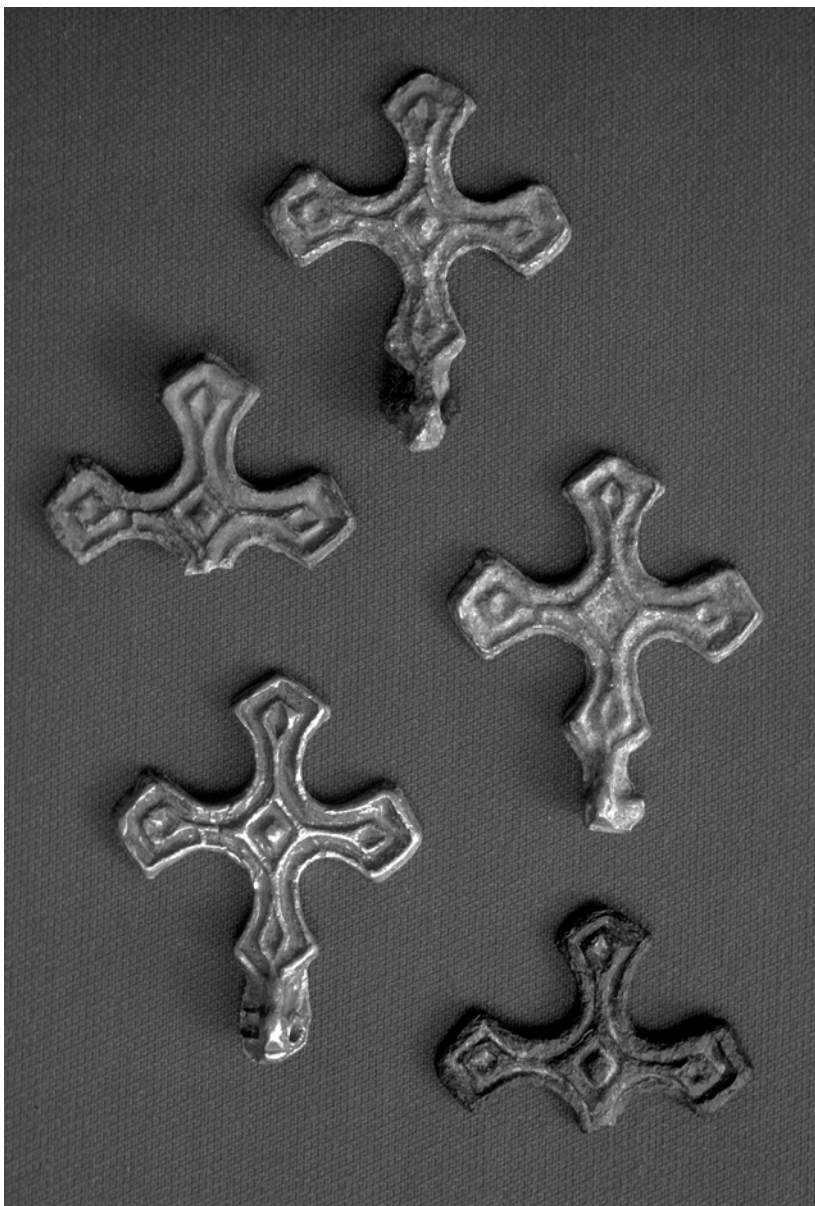


Fig. 61. Cross-shaped pendants of tin-lead from the sacrificial sites Mörträsket, Lappland and Gråträsk, Norrbotn. (Photo: Statens Historiska Museum.)

religious context.¹ Not only was this the case with aspects of neighboring Norse and Finno-Ugric religions, which probably did not differ greatly from Sámi religious conceptions, but it was also receptive to certain elements of Christianity. However, even if elements from other religions including Christianity were incorporated into the Sámi religious corpus, it does not necessarily mean that the Sámi also adopted their Christian meaning. By being recontextualized, these elements were also reinterpreted and given new meanings. Sámi attitudes toward exterior religious influence also seem to have varied significantly from region to region, making the outcome of this interaction equally different.²

It is important to keep these qualifications in mind as we examine some features of Sámi religion as well as the outside influences and pressure to which it was exposed over the centuries. The culmination of this pressure came with the extensive missionary campaign that the state authorities launched at the end of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth century. All manifestations of Sámi religion were then made illegal, and the performance of rites and transmission of Sámi religious conceptions—to the degree they still occurred—were repressed in all but the most private and taboo-reserved contexts. It is somewhat paradoxical that the most important written sources we have today for understanding pre-Christian Sámi religion consist of reports dating from between ca. 1670 and 1750 written by clergymen and missionaries. Thus, they were conceived of by the very people who were actively involved in eradicating this religion. In order to provide a context for comprehending these sources, we will therefore first present some main features of the missionary efforts towards the Sámi from the Middle Ages to the eighteenth century. We will then analyze these sources and the surviving material culture to give an overview of some basic features of pre-Christian Sámi religion and cosmology.

6.1.1 *Early Contacts with Christianity*

Already from the end of the High Middle Ages, the population in the boundary zones of the Sámi settlement area had been exposed to Christian influence and missionary campaigns. As mentioned earlier, the Norwegian King Haakon V issued an amendment in 1313 stating that the Sámi would be granted reduced fines for offences they might have committed

¹ Rydving 1993, 15, 75.

² Ibid., 75.

during the first twenty years after their conversion to Christianity.³ From the context, it appears that this amendment was mainly aimed at the Sámi living along the coast in the west, and that it was connected with the Norwegian Catholic Church's enforcement of Christian law. This means that the Coastal Sámi in northern Norway had been exposed to a certain Christian influence, but that the Christianization process was far from finished. As late as 1500, in relation to an internal clerical struggle about the rights of the churches in South Troms, it was claimed that in the country surrounding the Trondenes church there were Sámi "full of necromancy and who, to a great degree, inflict damage and persecution on the Christians."⁴ Since the statement came from a man who wished to promote his candidacy for the parish pastor position in Trondenes, he probably exaggerated both the Sámi's heathendom and the danger it constituted for the Norwegian population. At the same time, the area's character reputation as a religious borderland was also stressed, because the area was situated "at Christianity's borders against the pagan, schismatic Russians." This rather harsh and incorrect characterization of the Russian Orthodox Church must be seen in relation to the long rivalry between Norway and Russia (formerly Novgorod) over controlling the Sámi and their land.

On the Swedish side, there are scattered reports of missionary initiatives towards the Sámi from the Late Middle Ages and some Sámi had probably come in contact with Christianity through Swedish colonists in Norrbotten. Thus, already in 1345 the archbishop of Uppsala is supposed to have baptized a certain number of "Finns and Lapps" during a visit to Tornio. In addition, there is a noteworthy story about a Sámi woman, Margrete who, in 1389, is supposed to have paid a visit to the union queen bearing the same name in order to awaken interest for the spread of Christianity among the Sámi. In any case, together with the Danish archbishop of Lund, the queen issued a letter in Latin on August 6 of the same year to the entire Sámi people, especially those belonging to Sweden, in which she urged conversion and baptism. Further implementation of that conversion was entrusted to the archbishop of Uppsala. Any direct, practical results of this initiative are not known, but the letter does at least indicate that the question of the Sámi's conversion was already an issue that received the crown's attention. Not until thirty years later, in 1419, is

³ NgL, vol. III, 1849, 107.

⁴ NgL, 2. Rekke, vol. III, 1976, 443.

there certain information about a missionary who worked in Lappland, but more specific circumstances around his work are unknown.⁵ Sweden's last Catholic archbishop, Johannes Magnus, was likewise concerned with the task of baptizing the Sámi and asked the Pope to become involved, but in vain.⁶ After the Reformation, missionaries were sent to the Sámi areas, but a more permanent church organization that could substantiate and support those efforts was not established until the reign of Karl IX, shortly after 1600 (see chap. 5). In the following period, two schools were founded to train Sámi boys for serving as clergymen in the lappmarks, first in Piteå in 1614 and then another one in Lycksele in 1631. The latter eventually became known as the 'Skyttean school,' after the man who initiated it, Johan Skytte, a leading member of the Swedish Council of the Realm. Early in the seventeenth century, the first Sámi language teaching materials were available: a *Song Book* and the *ABC Book in the Lappish Tongue*, written in a sort of south Sámi language with a sprinkling of Swedish and Finnish.⁷



Fig. 62. Medieval reproductions of the Catholic "Mary monogram" (the Gothic minuscule "m"). The monogram was also borrowed into Sámi ornamentation, inter alia for decorating spoons (from Fjellström 1985.)

⁵ O. Kolsrud 1947, 3.

⁶ Steen 1954, 89–94.

⁷ Ibid., 95.

As for other expressions of external religious influence, one can note that the Virgin Mary was attached to and identified with the Sámi goddess *Sáráhkká* to a certain degree.⁸ In addition, the letter 'm,' as formed in Gothic minuscule script, which was a Catholic symbol for the Virgin Mary, was borrowed into Sámi ornamentation.⁹ From the early eighteenth century, there are reports of Sámi fasting customs in East Finnmark every Friday and in connection with specific fast days, which might indicate influence from Catholic practice.¹⁰ Among pictures on extant shaman drums there are, moreover, several figures that seem to represent 'church,' 'Christian people on their way to church,' etc. This seems to indicate that the Sámi incorporated symbols into the drums of institutions that they observed from their neighbors and that they conceived of as being especially powerful.¹¹

On the Russian side, the establishment of monasteries played an important role in converting the Sámi on the Kola Peninsula and in the White Sea area to the Orthodox faith. From the Middle Ages, the Sámi in these areas had been in contact with baptized Russians and Karelians,¹² but a more systematic conversion campaign was not implemented until the sixteenth century after the Russian Orthodox Church had been reorganized as a national church in 1489 with a patriarch in Moscow.¹³ According to Russian sources, Sámi people on the southwestern Kola coast had been baptized in 1526. Moreover, the Russian mission to the Sámi was characterized by individual monks moving out from the established monasteries, settling among the Sámi, and working as preachers. In this way, they founded new religious centers. Feodorit, a monk from the Solovetskiy monastery, settled among the Sámi along the Kola fjord at the beginning of the sixteenth century, while the legendary Trifon went to the *Beahcán* (Pechenga) fjord and founded a monastery there in the 1530s.¹⁴ In the Skolt Sámi territories, several chapels were also built that, according to tradition, were connected to Trifon. In the 1560s, another chapel was built at the Pasvik Sámi's summer site *Keeuŋes* (Boris-Gleb), near the mouth of the Pasvik river (consecrated to the Ukrainian saints Boris and Gleb) and, at about the same time, another was built in *Neiden* (consecrated to

⁸ Friis 1871, 37.

⁹ Fjellström 1985, 490–493; Dunfield 2001, 106, 241.

¹⁰ Isak Olsen, cited in Qvigstad 1910, 21–23.

¹¹ Manker 1950; Odner 1983, 65.

¹² Storå 1971.

¹³ Sergejeva 2000.

¹⁴ Storå 1971, 281.

St. George).¹⁵ These measures must be understood against the background of the more general political-ecclesiastical context. The Russian Orthodox Church experienced rivalry—and antagonism—from the Western church, first in the form of Catholicism and then in the form of reformed Lutheranism, and their missionary efforts were clearly an attempt to prevent the East Sámi, and in particular the Skolt Sámi, from falling under the influence of the West.

6.1.2 *Rituals Connected to the Naming and the Crossing of Religious Boundaries*

The minimum requirements that the Catholic Church set for people to be regarded as Christians were, according to decisions adopted early in the thirteenth century (the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215), that one was baptized, that one confessed, and that one took communion at least once a year. Much indicates that the Sámi developed pragmatic and ritual strategies that put them in a position to fulfill these minimum requirements, while continuing their own religious practices in internal Sámi contexts. These rituals were tied precisely to these central events, baptism and communion, and constituted a form of complementary strategies that enabled the Sámi to participate in both religious spheres, and, so to speak, operate with double religious identity. Seen this way, they appear to be part of a more general pattern of 'double communication' where the Sámi, through centuries-long contact with their Scandinavian neighbors, developed a repertoire of cultural expressions and attitudes that was accessible and customary for other parts of the population, including representatives of the state and the church, while simultaneously maintaining and generating their internal cultural repertoire.

We shall now turn to look closer at two types of ceremonies that enabled the Sámi to take part in different religious and cultural spheres as well as cross the border between religions. The first concerns the naming and baptism of newborn infants. The main features of these rituals seem to recur in the South, Central and North Sámi areas, even though the sources from various regions do not provide equally good information about the details.¹⁶

At a child's birth, certain ceremonies were carried out to find out what name the child should have. This could be determined by a dead relative

¹⁵ Storå 1971, 142; 1977, 67–81; Sergejeva 2000.

¹⁶ Rydving 1993, 115–127.

appearing to the mother in a dream, by prayers to *Sáráhkká*, or by the father or a *noaidi* (shaman) using the drum. After that, one went to church, where Christian baptism was performed, and the child received a name that could be accepted in a Christian context. The pastors, with the consent of the authorities, did not allow the use of Sámi names since they considered them pagan.¹⁷ Upon returning home from church, however, new rituals were performed in order to 'wash off' the Christian name. In South Sámi areas, the child could get a *sjiele*, that is, a small object of silver or bronze as a sign that the Christian baptism had been annulled. Thereafter, a separate Sámi naming ceremony was performed, which could include the use of both water and sacrifices. The name that the child then received was used by the Sámi among themselves and was not supposed to reach the ears of non-Sámi people.¹⁸ A name, of course, is an essential aspect of a person's identity. To a great extent, the Sámi used the custom of naming after dead relatives. The intention was that especially desirable characteristics of these ancestors would be transferred to the child. However, circumstances later in life could reveal that the naming had been wrong, for example, by illness being attached to the name. In such cases, the person concerned could be given a new name, by means of corresponding ceremonies where the old name was 'washed off.'

This strategy of double naming, which put the Sámi in a position to act in both cultural spheres, is of course not well represented in the historical records. There is, therefore, no reason to be surprised when the tax rolls and the other written sources show a clear preponderance of Christian and Norwegian names for the Sámi. As was evident, Sámi names quite simply had very little chance of being documented through this sort of material. Thus, the large majority of Scandinavian names in these sources cannot be used as any proof for the Sámi having been 'Norwegianized,' or as any kind of measure of how widespread Christianity was among them.

Other rituals and ceremonies were also performed to allow participation in both Christian and Sámi religious spheres. Especially challenging was the participation in communion that, together with confession, concerned the core of Christian doctrine. Through the missionaries' work in the South Sámi area, some information has been recorded concerning a set of rites that the Sámi practiced, both to enable themselves to partici-

¹⁷ In 1559, for example, the Swedish king Gustav I (Vasa) issued an order to do away with Sámi names (Nielsen 1990, 68).

¹⁸ Rydving 1993, 124–127.

pate in this central Christian ritual and to neutralize its effects. These rituals were most often associated with the goddess Sáráhká, and included honoring her with a toast (South Sámi: *Saaraahka gaerie*). Based on the account given by Håkan Rydving,¹⁹ we have summarized them as follows:

Before the Sámi left home and during their journey, they performed several rituals to ask their own gods for permission and forgiveness that they were going to participate in the Christian ceremony. This could also be accompanied by eating and/or drinking rituals. Just before entering the church, they directed yet another prayer to their own gods, most often Sáráhká. Thereafter, they participated in communion in the usual way. But as soon as they were outside the church again, they directed a prayer of thanks to their own powers, and on the way home performed several forgiveness rituals as well.

Rydving has also emphasized how Christian and Sámi rituals took place at different places and at different times of the year, and partly followed different cycles, something that facilitated the ability to participate in both religious spheres. The way church life in the Sámi areas was organized, the Christian church holidays were concentrated at a few times during the year and, in particular, took place in connection with the market periods in January and February. In their local setting, and within a domestic context, the Sámi could perform sacrifices and rites at almost any time of year. There were some larger communal events, such as an autumn feast at the end of September and the Ruohtta period in December that marked transitions between different seasons, but there were no fixed rituals that were repeated every week or month. Thus, the Christian and the Sámi rituals could be practiced side by side.²⁰

6.1.3 *The Sámi in the Witchcraft Trials of the Seventeenth Century*

Even before the new missionary campaign started towards the end of the seventeenth century, the Sámi religion had already been met by some severe repressive measures from the reformed Lutheran government authorities concerning what was interpreted as witchcraft or magic. Witchcraft and magic included all expressions of 'unnatural' influence on humans, animals, or nature: both so-called white magic, which aimed at healing, finding stolen goods and lost objects, prophesying, or communicating with humans in distant places, as well as so-called black magic,

¹⁹ Ibid., 127–136.

²⁰ Ibid., 158–159.

which was intended to cause harm, for example by bewitching people and instigating weather changes (called weather magic).

The witchcraft trials were far from being directed primarily against the Sámi; rather, they were a common European phenomenon. In Norway as a whole, it is estimated that approximately 300 people, mostly women, were executed for witchcraft in the period between 1550 and 1700.²¹ In a number of central European countries, at the same time there were many extensive sorcery trials. Recent research has directed scrutiny at common European or Western European explanatory factors and stressed the departure from the medieval world of ideas that the Reformation implied, with a subsequent split in the form of the Counter Reformation and religious wars.²² In a number of the confessional state formations that were consolidated in the wake of the religious wars, decisive emphasis was put on combating what was understood as false teaching, heresy, and deviation from state-supported doctrine. At the same time, popular everyday magic such as blessings, readings, and conjuring were interpreted as the devil's work and, as such, were to be eradicated. Detailed theological and legal justifications were given, and demonology (the doctrine of the devil) was a highly regarded discipline. Recent research has also stressed the role that the states played as organizers and promoters behind the witchcraft trials, including in Denmark-Norway.²³

In Scandinavia, however, particular attention was paid to the northernmost regions where the Sámi lived, not least because the demonologists of that era thought that the center of evil lay in the north. For that reason, as well as issues of political dominion and control of the resources in the north, the Sámi and their alleged witchcraft came under scrutiny. The conception of the Sámi as especially capable of witchcraft can also be construed as a negative ethnic stereotype. In the Danish-Norwegian context, Finnmark was clearly overrepresented among the sorcery trials: with under one percent of Norway's population, the region had 16 percent of all witchcraft cases and 31 percent of all death sentences.²⁴ An important factor behind this large share was probably the active role that the provincial governors of that era (mainly Hans Kønningham and Hans Lilienskiold) played in carrying out and pursuing a policy that was initiated by the highest authorities. After King Christian IV's sea journey

²¹ Gilje and Rasmussen 2002, 235.

²² *Ibid.*, 236–237.

²³ Rian 1997, 375 and following pages; Hagen and Sparboe 1998.

²⁴ Gilje and Rasmussen 2002, 235.

around the north of Finnmark and to Kola in 1599, where the king claimed that he himself had experienced Sámi weather magic, he issued a separate decree against Sámi witchcraft in 1609 intended for the two governors in northern Norway. They received orders to persecute Sámi witchcraft “without mercy.” The grounds given by the king for these measures, however, obviously emanated from his policy of securing the interests of the Danish-Norwegian union in the northern areas. He intervened in local conflicts over resources that had been triggered by Norwegian attempts at colonizing the Finnmark fjords. Norwegians and “other pious people” were, allegedly, afraid to settle in the inner parts of the fjords because of the Sámi’s frequent use of witchcraft.²⁵

All the same, the Sámi made up a minority of those who were accused and condemned to death (burned) for witchcraft in Finnmark. The large majority were Norwegian women. The period from 1593 to 1682 is particularly well covered by the sources. Of a total of 138 documented witchcraft cases from this period, Norwegian women were accused in 103, and seventy-three received the death sentence. In contrast, only twenty-seven Sámi were accused in the same period, and eighteen of them were sentenced to death. Although the sources are much poorer from Troms and Nordland, if we add the proven cases from those areas, we find that a total of thirty-seven Sámi (eleven women and twenty-six men) from the northern Norwegian counties were accused of witchcraft, out of a total of 1,777.²⁶ On the Swedish side, one calculation shows that in the period 1649–1741, forty-nine witchcraft trials took place against Sámi in the lappmarks, mostly against men.²⁷

Women were primarily accused of witchcraft among the Norwegian population, while the men were in the majority among the Sámi. This may actually reflect an older, gender-specific division involving cult practice in the two cultures. In the Norse society of the Viking Era, sorcery (*seid*) was associated with women. Men who practiced sorcery were considered to have overstepped a tabooed boundary and were considered as ‘effeminate.’²⁸ Within Sámi culture, on the contrary, such practices were a man’s domain. In the witchcraft trials against the Norwegian Finnmark women, however, there were also a number of references to Sámi

²⁵ Alm 2000; Hagen 2002, 343.

²⁶ Hagen 2002, 322.

²⁷ Granqvist 2001, 40.

²⁸ “The Saga of the Ynglings,” in Snorri Sturlusson, *Heimskringla* 2005, 10–11; See also Hedeager 1997; Solli 2002.

witchcraft, and strikingly, many of the accused claimed to have learned their arts from Sámi women, often located in areas further south in Troms and northern Nordland.²⁹ These references could, of course, have served as tactical explanations if the accused did not wish to give information about others in their local milieu, which otherwise often happened, with widespread consequences and so-called chain trials as a result. In any case, it suggests that the conceptions about Sámi witchcraft were widespread and coincided with the prevailing view of the local authorities.

There are few traces of allegations about actual shamanistic activity in the indictments against the accused Finnmark Sámi, at least in terms of criteria normally used to identify such activity, such as journeys undertaken in a state of ecstasy or trance. In most cases, the accused is alleged to have bewitched other people by means of Sámi sorcery (*gand*) or committed other forms of 'white' or 'black' magic (cures, finding lost objects, weather magic). A few cases from the 1620s and 1630s reveal underlying conflicts about the means of subsistence, which, in part, were related to the beginning of Norwegian migration into the interior of the fjords caused by the crises in the fisheries during the 1620s and 1630s.³⁰ In part, it was also due to commercial interests having leased the rights to salmon fishing in the large rivers.³¹ On Swedish side, there were not many references to shamanistic activity in the witchcraft trials; instead, they often involved accusations about sacrificial acts.

6.1.4 *New Missionary Campaigns in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*

At the end of the seventeenth century, most likely there were a few Sámi who wholeheartedly held onto the Sámi religion and others had converted to Christianity, while a significant number alternated between the two forms of religion, not least among the inland Sámi in the west.³²

It was this situation that dawned on the authorities and clergy with a shock at the end of the seventeenth century and in the early 1700s, and led to a new missionary campaign. The realization that large numbers of Sámi still practiced their own religion, partly in combination with modest participation in a number of Christian practices and rites, first hit home

²⁹ Hagen and Sparboe 1998.

³⁰ Nielssen 1986.

³¹ Hagen 2002.

³² Rydving 1993, 135.

on the Swedish side in the 1680s.³³ On the Norwegian side, this realization came around thirty years later, prompted by representatives of the new pietistic school of thought that was in the process of gaining a foothold in Denmark-Norway. This came to be of importance for how the mission in the two countries initially operated. On the Swedish side, the new phase in missionary work was introduced by clergy who had been schooled in Lutheran orthodoxy, which had gained a national platform through a new Swedish church law in 1686. For these missionaries, the actual church service with preaching and the accompanying moral guidance was central, and the demand for attendance at services was, therefore, upheld with threats of punishment. The pietistic missionaries, on the contrary, stressed the development of a religious consciousness in the individual person, with a demand for personal conversion and sincerity in the faith. This also entailed a demand that preaching among the Sámi should be done in their mother tongue, and by people who had acquired knowledge about their mode of living and religious practice. From last decades of the seventeenth century, pietistic currents began to manifest themselves in Sweden as well,³⁴ and in the 1720s, there was frequent cross-border contact between clergy and missionaries who exchanged experiences and knowledge about the Sámi religion. Several Swedish pastors also worked for shorter or longer periods as missionaries on the Norwegian side.

In both countries, the Sámi's religious expressions were branded as idolatry, superstition, and witchcraft, and the strategy aimed at exposing those who continued religious practices, especially by using the drums and by sacrificial rites for the different deities. For this purpose, informing was also encouraged. The Swedish authorities began using the legal system, seeking to extract confessions through interrogation and inquiries at district court sessions. From legal records of the Swedish lappmarks, it is evident that individual Sámi accused others of witchcraft. The Norwegian authorities also tried to root out the *noaidis* and the active drum users, though this was largely done by visits from specially-appointed missionaries. Authorities on both sides of the border sought to collect and destroy as many drums as possible. During the years 1722–23, over 100 drums were supposed to have been collected and sent via Trondheim to Copenhagen, where they were lost in the great fire of 1728.³⁵ Profaning and physically

³³ Anderzén 1992, 50.

³⁴ Rydving 1993, 49; Anderzén 1992, 64 and following pages.

³⁵ Qvigstad in Nordnorske samlinger, vol. V, 1943, 36.

destroying sacrificial sites, *sieidis*, and holy places was central, and was carried out intensively on both sides. In some regions, great importance was attached to locating and registering such places, so that they could be visited and destroyed. In less than one month in 1722, the missionary Jens Kildal destroyed forty sacrificial sites in Ofoten, and on a journey to Pite lappmark in 1726–27, he destroyed seventeen. Either the missionaries destroyed the sites themselves or they forced the Sámi to do it. During a stay at Karlsøy in Røttangen (Nordland county) in September of 1722, Thomas von Westen forced the Sámi to show him five sacrificial sites that he then made them destroy, at the same time as they had to promise to cease sacrificial practices. In a few places, such as the Varanger peninsula, even today one can find broken *sieidi* stones lying in fragments around earlier sacrificial sites.³⁶

At the same time, it is important to be careful in presenting the missionaries' activity among the Sámi as exclusively an asymmetrical relationship tied to acts of tyranny and the abuse of power. In many situations the missionaries operated alone; they found themselves in a vast and foreign landscape without immediate access to physical means of force and were themselves the object of reactions from the Sámi population. The report of the Swedish missionary Gabriel Tuderus illustrates how this could have seemed to be a lonesome and rather futile task. In a report, he tells how, during the winters of 1669 and 1670, he tried to get the Sámi in Enare, Sodankylä, Sompio, and other *siidas* in Kemi lappmark to give up their pagan customs and convert to Christianity. It is a story of frequent setbacks and disappointments, in which Tuderus finally felt "pursued" and in "mortal danger."³⁷ His detailed report provides vivid insight into how strong the old ideas of faith and the sacrificial rituals were among the Sámi in northern Finland around 1670, "which they by no way would discard."³⁸

6.1.5 *The Organization and Methods of the Norwegian Mission*

In 1714, a special government college was established in Copenhagen, the Mission Collegium, with the responsibility for the pagan mission within the Danish-Norwegian union. When in the following year, it was supposed to take a position on how the work among the Sámi should be organized,

³⁶ Niemi 1983, 386.

³⁷ Tuderus 1773, 26–42.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 30.

the Collegium chose to follow a suggestion that had been advanced by a pietistic group of seven pastors residing in the northern part of western Norway and in the region Trøndelag. The group called itself The Seven Stars³⁹ and had earlier criticized what they understood as indifference among the clergy, negligence from the authorities, lack of church discipline, and insufficient education. In their opinion, a Christian way of living had to be pursued through public confessions during communion and through church discipline. At the same time, they turned against activities that had hitherto been considered as innocent, such as play and dance. In so doing, this was also a specific criticism of the way the Trondheim Bishop of Nidaros, Peder Krog, managed his office.⁴⁰

The leading figure within The Seven Stars was Thomas von Westen (1682–1727), originally from Trondheim, but at this point a parish pastor at Veøy in Romsdal. He was appointed lector in theology at the Latin school in Trondheim and scribe (*notarius*) for the chapter, and was supposed to function as the Mission Collegium's local substitute (*vicarius*). At the same time, a total of thirteen special mission districts were established in northern Norway and northern Trøndelag.⁴¹ Thus, an entire, independent mission organization was established alongside the established, bishop-led church organization in the Nidaros diocese. Von Westen was, in reality, to be considered as an independent mission bishop in the diocese.⁴² In itself, this was bound to lead to a conflict of authority, and the antagonisms were further intensified by the fact that the bishop and von Westen held rather different views on how the missionary work ought to be organized. Bishop Krog also thought that Christianity's standing among the Sámi had to be strengthened, but argued that this could happen by giving them instruction in Norwegian. Von Westen, on the contrary, was convinced that the Sámi, out of humane and pedagogical considerations, ought to be dealt with in their own mother tongue. This was thus the first time the question of whether the Sámi should receive instruction in

³⁹ Name with a double connotation, both referring to its seven members and to the Norwegian designation of the Pleiades, a star cluster named after the seven daughters of the god Atlas in Greek mythology.

⁴⁰ Lysaker 1987, 241.

⁴¹ Steen 1954, 140–141. When the system was fully developed in 1724, the mission districts were divided in the following way: 1. Varanger and Tana 2. Porsanger and Laksefjord 3. Vest—Finnmark 4. Skjervøy and Kvaenangen 5. Karlsøy, Lyngen and Ullsfjord 6. Senja and Vesterålen 7. Lødingen, Tysfjord and Ofoten 8. Saltdalen 9. Gildeskål 10. Rana 11. Vefsn 12. Overhalla 13. Innherred Snåsa (Nordnorske samlinger, vol. V, 1943, 29–30–; Steen 1954).

⁴² Lysaker 1987, 245.

Sámi or not, later known as the 'Norwegianization question,' was raised. This would create a fundamental and lasting conflict in the authorities' policy towards the Sámi throughout the eighteenth century and up until the last half of the nineteenth century, when the Norwegianization policy triumphed. The question of the language that missionary activity should adopt did not become an issue to the same extent on the Swedish-Finnish and the Russian sides. In Sweden-Finland, Swedish was never a real alternative, but further to the north, where a great number of Finnish-speaking agriculturists had settled within the Sámi areas, Finnish became the language of church services.

In connection with the Latin school in Trondheim, in 1717 the Mission Collegium established a *Seminarium Scholasticum* for the education of future missionaries, but it was unclear where ultimate responsibility lay, and this, coupled with the opposition of the bishop, meant that teaching came to a standstill. Two years later, therefore, von Westen established his own private seminar, called *Seminarium domesticum*. This can be considered as a forerunner of what came to be known as the *Seminarium Lapponicum*, which was not established until 1752 during a golden age for the mission.⁴³ Von Westen also succeeded in outmaneuvering Bishop Krog, and until 1720, he acquired ever-greater authority. Financially, the mission apparatus was supported by imposing a special mission fee on all churches in the country, and at the same time, the surplus from most churches in northern Norway was supposed to go to the mission.⁴⁴

Von Westen undertook three extensive journeys to the Sámi settlement areas, in the years 1716, 1718–19, and 1722–23. His first journey was to East Finnmark, where he met the teacher and missionary Isak Olsen (ca. 1680–1730), who had come to Kjølvik as a tutor for a pastor's family but who was now working among the Sámi in East Finnmark. Throughout his life and contact with the Sámi, Isak Olsen had learned the language and obtained a relatively good knowledge of their manner of living and religious conceptions, and it was he who gave von Westen his first real introduction to Sámi religion. Von Westen himself only partly mastered the language. After von Westen's visit, Olsen was transferred first to Trondheim and then to Copenhagen as an interpreter and informant for the Mission Collegium. He also summarized his memoirs from his time in East Finnmark in the

⁴³ Steen 1954, 198–211, 264–265.

⁴⁴ Lysaker 1987, 246.

manuscript "On the Fallacies and Superstition of the Lapps,"⁴⁵ a work that is a valuable source, since it is based on independent observations before von Westen had truly embarked upon his missionary work.

On the second trip, von Westen also stayed in Finnmark, but in addition he visited Troms and Nordland. The last journey, however, was reserved for Nordland and Trøndelag. It was very significant, however, that on this journey he met Jens Kildal (1683–1767) from Salten, who at this point in time was a missionary in Lødingen and Ofoten. Kildal was married to a Sámi woman from Ofoten and, therefore, had far more opportunity to gain insight into the Sámi's own mental world than other missionaries. From his activity, he had assembled and in part processed material which he made available to von Westen, and he also exchanged information with pastors on the Swedish side. After von Westen's death in 1727, Kildal wrote a rather long monograph on "The Suppression of Idolatry" (*Afguderiets dempelse*), which was meant to serve as a textbook for schoolmasters sent out among the Sámi.⁴⁶ Kildal's knowledge and insights, though, came to serve as a model for von Westen's further investigations, which were concentrated in the South Sámi area in the following years. The center of gravity for von Westen's activity was thus shifted southward, and his most thorough investigations reflect South Sámi religious practice.⁴⁷

As a result of this work, von Westen eventually assembled an impressive material concerning the Sámi's 'confessions.' In a few archive registers, seven volumes are mentioned, in others, twenty-two volumes. Von Westen had promised the Mission Collegium to compile a comprehensive account of the mission's activity and results on the basis of the assembled material, but nothing came of it. Instead, others used his material for syntheses, mainly his collaborator Hans Skanke (1679–1739), who, after von Westen's death, took care of his posthumous manuscripts and in the years 1728–31, wrote an extensive mission history with the Latin title *Epitomes Historiae Missionis Lapponica* (Summary of Lapp Mission History).⁴⁸ Skanke's work was independent, and unfortunately, he left out a range of information concerning the origin and sources for the different customs and ideas he described. All the same, it is considered today to be

⁴⁵ Qvigstad, 1910.

⁴⁶ To be sure, this work builds largely on his own observations, but since he also refers to von Westen, it is difficult to decide what is his own material, what stems from von Westen, and what refers to material originally collected by Kildal but reworked by von Westen.

⁴⁷ Rydving 1995, 46.

⁴⁸ Excerpts printed in *Nordnorske samlinger*, vol. V, 1943.



Fig. 63. The missionaries' preaching among the Sámi in the middle of the seven-teenth century, as depicted by Knud Leem in his "Beskrivelse over Finnmarkens lapper (Description of the Finnmark Sámi)". (from Leem 1767.)

the best introduction to the material collected by von Westen.⁴⁹ The original material was later lost, probably in the extensive fire in Copenhagen in 1793.⁵⁰ From von Westen himself, there are only a small number of manuscripts extant, a few letters, and some writings that primarily deal with organizational conditions of the church and the mission, mainly his *Topographica Ecclesiastica* from 1717.⁵¹

Through the approach that von Westen and the other missionaries gradually adopted concerning actual conversion, focus was directed at the *noaidis* and the other active drum users. When possible, the missionaries tried to get information from Sámi who had already converted about those who still adhered to the old traditions. Already by 1711, a system was introduced in Finnmark with 'holiday watchmen' who were to report violations of Christian norms and any kinds of practicing the Sámi religion to the authorities and the clergy.⁵² At the same time, the missionaries preached fervent sermons, in which they urged the Sámi to confess and abjure their old faith. When someone showed a sign of wanting to open up, they were taken under "secret spiritual treatment" in private. Then they were encouraged to reveal all sides of their religious practice. Demonizing of Sámi ideas and rites was central, that is, they were interpreted as results of the devil's work and the person concerned was urged to admit this. When the person had given an explanation, under the threat not to lie, he or she was given hope of God's grace, and the conversion was concluded with common prayers and a sermon on the part of the missionary. In his account, Jens Kildal states that von Westen recorded everything that was exposed during the confessions in his "Book of Confessions," and that at leave-taking, he urged the newly converted to inform him about anyone who was still engaged in 'idolatry,' preferably among the Sámi at the next stop on his itinerary.⁵³

The mission also had a governmental policy aspect. Both during and after The Great Northern War (1700–1721), both Sweden and Denmark-Norway sought to tie the Sámi to the life of the church on their own side. At the final border settlement, it would be important to be able to prove that the Sámi in one area were under one state's ecclesiastical jurisdiction. On assignment from the authorities, as early as 1706–07, the theological

⁴⁹ Rydving 1995, 31; 1993, 37.

⁵⁰ Qvigstad in Nordnorske samlinger, vol. V, 1943, 38.

⁵¹ Parts of which are printed in Nordnorske samlinger, vol. 1, 1938.

⁵² Hammond 1787, 28–34.

⁵³ Nordnorske samlinger, vol. V, 1943, 126–152.

candidate Povel Resen undertook a fairly long journey among the Sámi in the border areas in order to investigate their religious life and their relationships to the Swedish church. The result was two extensive reports to the central government in Copenhagen. For the Danish-Norwegian authorities, the problem was that the migrating Sámi often attended church services on the Swedish side, partly combined with market trading. In East Finnmark, for example, there was a complaint that the mountain Sámi went to church in Ohcejohka (Utsjoki), and never to Vadsø, because “there they preach in Norwegian, which they absolutely cannot understand.”⁵⁴ Around 1720, it was reported that many mountain Sámi in Finnmark had migrated to the Russian side after the Danish-Norwegian mission had become more active, so “they could go on with their idolatry and witchcraft.”⁵⁵ Further south, many reindeer-herding Sámi likewise found it expedient to visit church on the Swedish side, since it suited their migration cycle and the market periods.

A countermove from the Danish-Norwegian side was to establish churches and special mission chapels in the Sámi areas. In the course of a few years, twenty-six assembly houses and a number of churches were constructed at the following places: in Máze, on Angsnes in Varanger, at Gullholmen in Tana, at Lebesby in Laksefjord, at Kistrand in Porsanger, at Kjepsnes in Tysfjord, and at Moldjorda in Beiarn. Furthermore, von Westen took the initiative for a few decrees that were supposed to oblige the Sámi and remove other reasons for their wanting to cross the border. In 1726, the king confirmed the ‘Sámi allodium,’ that is, the coastal Sámi’s traditional rights to a number of places in Troms and northern Nordland.⁵⁶ At the same time, the death penalty for witchcraft was rescinded, because the threat of execution had created obstacles for von Westen’s efforts to get the Sámi to openly confess their religious practices.

After von Westen’s death in 1727, a period of stagnation followed for the mission. His successor, Eiler Hagerup, was more in line with Bishop Krog. Not until 1743 did a new period of growth come. However, the question of which language should be used in preaching to the Sámi was under continuous debate. Some of the mission’s leaders followed von Westen’s opinion and ordered the appointed missionaries to “go in for the Finnish and Lappish language with all diligence.” The Sámi seminar in Trondheim

⁵⁴ Niemi 1983, 377.

⁵⁵ Tanner 1929, 60.

⁵⁶ Fogtman 1793, 604–607; Wessel-Berg, 1841, 489–491.

was re-established in 1752, now under the name *Seminarium Lapponicum*.⁵⁷ As leader and professor of the Sámi language, Knud Leem (1697–1774) was appointed. Leem had earlier been a missionary in Porsanger and Laksefjord as well as parish pastor in Alta. He was supposed to “teach in the Lappish language as many alumni of the Latin school in Trondheim as was considered necessary to select.”⁵⁸ Yet, the Mission Collegium occasionally supported the idea of having confession and teaching in Norwegian, albeit under protests and objections. The rational Frederik Nannestad, who took over as bishop in 1748, wrote to the Collegium:

... it is incomprehensible that an entire people and nation, a whole church, consisting of many thousands of souls, could be so forgotten, that His Majesty now does not have a single man, who now as pastor could listen to a Lapp's confession and admissions made in good conscience and in return answer the poor sinner on duty's behalf.⁵⁹

The counterargument was that the Sámi had now become so ‘Norwegianized’ that it was no longer expedient to distinguish between them and other ‘country people’ (That was also the justification for ending the *Seminarium Lapponicum* in 1774). In line with this, there was a suggestion to shut down the separate missionary service and instead entrust the ordinary, local pastors with these duties, as an unpaid service. Thus, the local pastors were supposed to see that the Sámi received appropriate teaching and preaching. In practice, this suggestion was partly carried out.⁶⁰

6.1.6 *Religious Publications and School Administration*

On the Norwegian side, the missionary campaign also led to the publication of religious books and edifying writings in the Sámi language. On the Swedish side, a number of translations had already been published during the seventeenth century, such as excerpts from the Bible. After the previously mentioned *ABC Book*, Luther's little catechism had been translated in 1633, and in 1648, the parish pastor in lower Tornio, Johannes Tornaëus, published his *Manuale Lapponicum*, a work of over a thousand pages. Alongside gospels and epistles, it contained selected portions of the Old Testament. In 1667, the catechism appeared in Pite and Lule Sámi languages, translated by the Sámi pastor Olaus Graan, who was also

⁵⁷ Steen 1954, 239.

⁵⁸ Rydving 1995, 38; Steen 1954, 265.

⁵⁹ Steen 1954, 242.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 245.

responsible for several other Sámi language publications. Not until 1728 were comparable works issued on the Norwegian side. On assignment from the Mission Collegium, the Alta missionary Morten Lund (1686–1757) published the catechism in North Sámi, the first Sámi language book printed in Denmark-Norway. Later in the century, Knut Leem continued this work, by publishing a number of textbooks and religious writings: a grammar of the mountain Sámi dialect in Porsanger (1748), a Danish-Sámi glossary (1756), an ABC and a new translation of the catechism (1767), as well as an extensive lexicon that was not completed until after his death, the *Lexicon Lapponicum bipartitum* (1768–81).⁶¹

The expansion of the mission's apparatus also comprised an organized educational system for the Sámi. Every mission district had appointed one or two (in some areas three) Finn schoolmasters who were supposed to teach Sámi youth to read and to introduce them to Christianity.⁶² Teaching occurred in specially built schools or in assembly buildings. In 1724, the mission had at its disposal twenty-six teachers, twenty-six assembly buildings, and eleven schools. Thus, the Sámi actually had a permanent school system established before the population in the rest of the country, which was not organized until 1739 when a general school ordinance was written for the whole country. The differences from the remaining northern Norwegian population were further underscored in that the two northernmost counties, Troms and Finnmark, were originally exempted from this general decree. Not until thirty years later did this regional school administration for Norwegians take on more organized forms.⁶³ The visitation reports from Finnmark in the eighteenth century also imply that, on average, reading ability was better among the Sámi than among the Norwegians.⁶⁴ A similar development occurred at the same time on the Swedish side. A decree in 1723 established a Royal Board of the Ecclesiastical Service in the Lappmarks (*Direktion för Lappmarkens Ecklesiastikverk*), which was supposed to supervise Christian education among the Sámi.⁶⁵

⁶¹ Steen 1954, 71–73, 329 and surround pages; Nesheim 1975.

⁶² Steen 1954, 140 and following pages; Storm undated.

⁶³ Sogner 1996, 227–228.

⁶⁴ NOU 1985, 14; Samisk kultur og utdanning, 46.

⁶⁵ Henrysson et al. 1993; Anderzén 1992, 64.

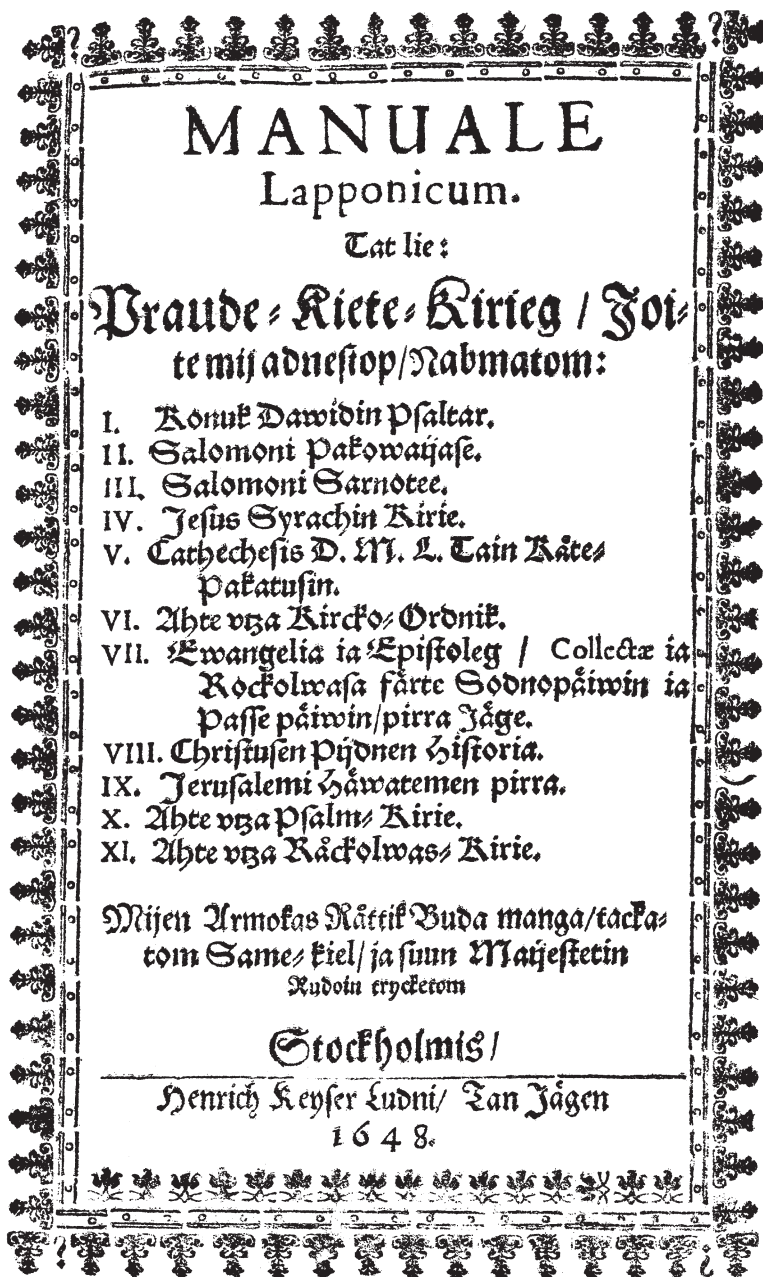


Fig. 64. Front cover page of Johannes Tornæus' work: "Manuale Lapponicum" from 1648.

6.2 WRITINGS ON SÁMI RELIGION

6.2.1 *Critical Considerations of the Source Material*

It was a strange and complicated worldview that revealed itself to the missionaries in their meeting with Sámi religion, and their depictions probably contain many adaptations and 'translations' into concepts and forms of thinking with which they were familiar. With their grounding in prevailing demonology, many, if not all of them, had a condemning and negative attitude towards what they saw as the devil's work. Faced with the missionary methods described above, the Sámi could not have been interested in exposing very many of their religious ideas. When they ended up in an interrogation situation under threat of punishment, it is possible that they tried to adapt their interpretations and make them as close as possible to the Christian world of ideas in order to present themselves in the best possible light. When information about the pre-Christian faith has emerged in this manner, we must be skeptical of the picture the missionaries drew in their writings, which would have been colored by their own schooling and their goal of converting the Sámi to a significant degree. On the whole, we must assume that the missionaries, to a large extent, were committed to their own frames of reference, and they may have translated the information they obtained from the Sámi in such a way that it corresponded with their own prior conceptions.⁶⁶

The missionaries may also have drawn an overly uniform picture of Sámi religion, without allowing for geographic and regional variation. They themselves were schooled in a rather uniform Christian theology and dogma, which had been developed over several centuries, and they may subconsciously have assumed that they were facing an equally uniform doctrine. As mentioned above, the most comprehensive seventeenth- and eighteenth-century descriptions come from the South Sámi area. The central Sámi areas of Pite and Lule lappmarks were also well covered, while the North Sámi area was only covered for the southernmost and northernmost parts. From Kemi lappmark, there are also only a couple of reports, while the Kola Sámi conceptions and traditions of faith were not mapped until later.⁶⁷ As we have seen, the missionaries situated in various areas exchanged notes and descriptions of Sámi rituals among themselves. They also copied each other and incorporated pieces of what they had received

⁶⁶ Bäckman 1975, 50 and following pages.

⁶⁷ Sergejeva 1997; 2001.

from others into their own manuscripts.⁶⁸ The result is that the extant written records describe the old form of Sámi religion as being much more uniform than it probably was.⁶⁹ In order to map the regional variation that existed, it is necessary to analyze the sources critically and closely in order to distinguish between the various influences and map the area of origin for individual traditions.⁷⁰

6.2.2 *Basic Features of the Understanding of Reality and Cosmology*

The Sámi religion reflected a fundamental conception of reality as consisting of a visible, material dimension and an invisible, spiritual dimension. The former was everyday reality, and the latter was populated by spirits and a number of divine beings. These forces were assumed to have a strong influence on life and the natural environment, such that one had to relate to them through a set of rules, taboos, and rituals.⁷¹ No sharp dividing line existed between culture and nature, at least not in the form of a dead nature and a living culture. Spirits reigned over important places in nature, and everything—animals, plants, rivers, mountains—were animated in the same way as humans were. It was therefore important to maintain contact with nature and nurture friendship with it, as it was expressed in stories and cult acts like sacrifices. Moreover, people and animals bore a relationship to each other that differed substantially from the modern way of thinking, in such a way that individual animals, for example, the bear, could be addressed as relatives or close friends. Also, natural phenomena such as the sun, moon, and thunder, had a central place in religion and were honored through various rituals. It was not so much the natural phenomena in themselves that were propitiated, but the powers or forces that were revealed in them.

Therefore, pre-Christian Sámi religion, similar to other shamanistic forms of religion, operated on certain fundamental assumptions about the continuity between separated parts of existence: between living and non-living matter, between the natural and the supernatural, between visible and invisible forces, and between this world and the other world. The dead, for example, lived on in certain places and could intervene in the

⁶⁸ Rydving 1995.

⁶⁹ See also Storå 1971; Pentikäinen 1973.

⁷⁰ Rydving 1995; Bäckman 1975.

⁷¹ Kalstad 1997.



Fig. 65. The sacrificial stone Ceavccegeadgi (“Graksesteinen”) at Mortensnes, Varanger. The stone is surrounded by 13 concentric rings of stone and is named after the coastal Sami’s practice of sacrificing fish fat and oil to the *sieidi*. (Photo: Ole Mattis Siri)

every day life of the living,⁷² the invisible could under certain conditions become visible, and the supernatural spheres could under certain circumstances be contacted, especially via the *noaidi* (shaman). This seems to have constituted the basis that underlay individual religious manifestations, even though these could vary somewhat from region to region.

Fundamental, too, was the division of existence into three different spheres or worlds: an upper world where the highest god resided who ruled over existence; a middle world, the earthly one, inhabited by people, their ‘advisors’ and ‘companions’ as well as a number of divine figures; and a lower world with several different realms of the dead.⁷³ The ‘life tree’ or ‘world tree’ (*axis mundi*) had the central function of connecting and mediating between these three spheres which, within the Sámi worldview, took the form of a pole with its endpoint in the North Star. The Sámi name of this pole or axis was *Vearalden tjuold*,⁷⁴ a term that was also

⁷² Friis 1871, 115.

⁷³ However, this division could also be a projection from the side of the missionaries, from the way they were accustomed to structuring the universe through their own studies. Some of the missionaries’ reports also mention five spheres.

⁷⁴ North Sámi, *čuolda*, Lule Sámi, *tjuoldda*, South Sámi, *tjoelte*.

used for the North Star. Individual sacrificial stones were considered to be symbols of this pole (among others, the stone at Mortensnes). The idea of a world pole, a world tree, and, in certain cases, a world flood or river, for that matter, is widespread among all the northern shamanistic religions from the Sámi areas and eastward.

The upper world was the residence of the highest, most abstract gods. Foremost was 'the world's sovereign,' in the South Sámi area called Vearelden álmaj or Raedie and in the North Sámi area, Dierpmis.⁷⁵ Vearelden álmaj's abode was understood to be among the stars and his functions were extensive: he had the responsibility for the fertility of animals and plants (often through a number of subordinate beings and gods), and he gave origin to humankind.⁷⁶ According to the manuscripts of the missionaries, this happened by his, or his son's, sending a soul to the mother goddess, Maadteraahka (or Máttaráhkká). She then created a fetus around the soul before she sent it on to one of her daughters. It was primarily Vearelden álmaj who was the highest god and who kept the world in place by means of the world pole that joined the three spheres. In his monograph, "The Suppression of Idolatry," Jens Kildal talks about the world pole as a column or pillar (*stytte*, 'support') and depicts the world sovereign's role in the following way:

There is sacrificed by idolatrous Lapps, annually every autumn, a reindeer ox, or another domestic animal, to Maylmenradien because, since he is the Lapps' highest god; he shall not allow the world to fall down, and he shall give them luck with reindeer, and at the sacrificial altar in honor of him a pole is placed, with a cleft on the end, called Maylmen pole, with which he shall uphold the world, and that pole shall be greased with the blood of the ox that is sacrificed to him...⁷⁷

On the Sámi drums, Vearelden álmaj often seems to be depicted as a human figure, possibly in combination with a sun symbol or a cross. Above and around him, there may be branched, curved lines that can be interpreted partly as reindeer antlers and partly as fertility symbols. The historian of religion, Åke Hultkrantz, however, thinks that it is the sun itself that is the symbol for Vearelden álmaj's transcendental nature, and that, at the same time, he could be portrayed as a reindeer in connection with the sun when expressing another aspect such as the Tjærvieraedie or 'the antler

⁷⁵ In the written records, the designation "Maylmen radien" also occurs, Kildal, *Nordnorske samlinger*, vol. V, 1943, 135.

⁷⁶ Skanke, *Nordnorske samlinger*, vol. V, 1943, 181.

⁷⁷ *Nordnorske samlinger*, vol. V, 1943, 141.

sovereign'.⁷⁸ This celestial reindeer figure might also be associated with the Kola Sámi's conceptions of Mjandaš: a divine white reindeer that also has a human's nature, and that, in a corresponding way, has the role of cosmic mediator between the universe's different parts.⁷⁹ Occasionally, Vearelden álmaj or Raedie is also depicted together with his wife (Raedien aahka), his son (Raediengiedtie) and his daughter (Raedienniejte). The latter was a sort of growth goddess who was involved with the first plants in spring and those that provided food to the reindeer during calving.

The term *Vearelden álmaj* has clear parallels to the Old Norse expression *Veraldargoð*, which on a couple of occasions was used for the Norse god Frøy who was also a fertility god. This similarity indicates that, in prehistoric times, there may have existed a certain fundamental, common horizon of understanding, which the Norse, the Sámi, and other Finno-Ugric cultures shared.⁸⁰

Still in the upper sphere, but mentioned as somewhat further down the hierarchy, we also find other gods with more specific functions, such as the wind god Biegålmaj (Bieggagállis) and the thunder god Hovrengaellies. Linked with the middle or earthly sphere are a number of other specific god figures, like the hunting god Liejpålmaj (Leaibolmmái or 'the Alder man') and the water god Tjaetsieålmaj, who ruled over lakes and fishing. The earthly sphere was also the home of the primeval mother Máttaráhkká and her three daughters, Sáráhkká, Juoksáhkká, and Uksáhkká.⁸¹ These female divine beings were especially of help to women and seem to have had a close relationship to the dwelling or turf hut. Sáráhkká was the goddess of pregnancy of both humans and animals: she helped pregnant women and was present at birth. If the unborn fetus that came from Máttaráhkká should develop into a girl, Sáráhkká took care of it. If, on the contrary, it was a boy, it was turned over to Juoksáhkká, the bow goddess or the goddess of the hunt.⁸² Sáráhkká played a central role as protector of home and family and was the one divine figure that the Sámi put their

⁷⁸ Hultkrantz 1994, 182–184.

⁷⁹ Terebikhin 1993.

⁸⁰ Drobin and Keinänen 2001.

⁸¹ Different terms were used for the Sámi deities in the various parts of the Sámi settlement area. Not only does the manner of writing vary for the different Sámi dialects, but some of the figures are only covered in sources from certain regions (Rydving 1995, 64–73). Of the name forms presented, Biegålmaj, Hovrengaellies, Liejpålmaj and Tjaetsieålmaj are South Sámi forms, while Bieggagállis and Leaibolmmái are North Sámi. The South Sámi names of the three daughters of the mother goddess are Saaraahka, Joeksaahka and Oksaahka.

⁸² Skanke, Nordnorske samlinger, vol. V, 1943, 184; Friis 1871, 87.

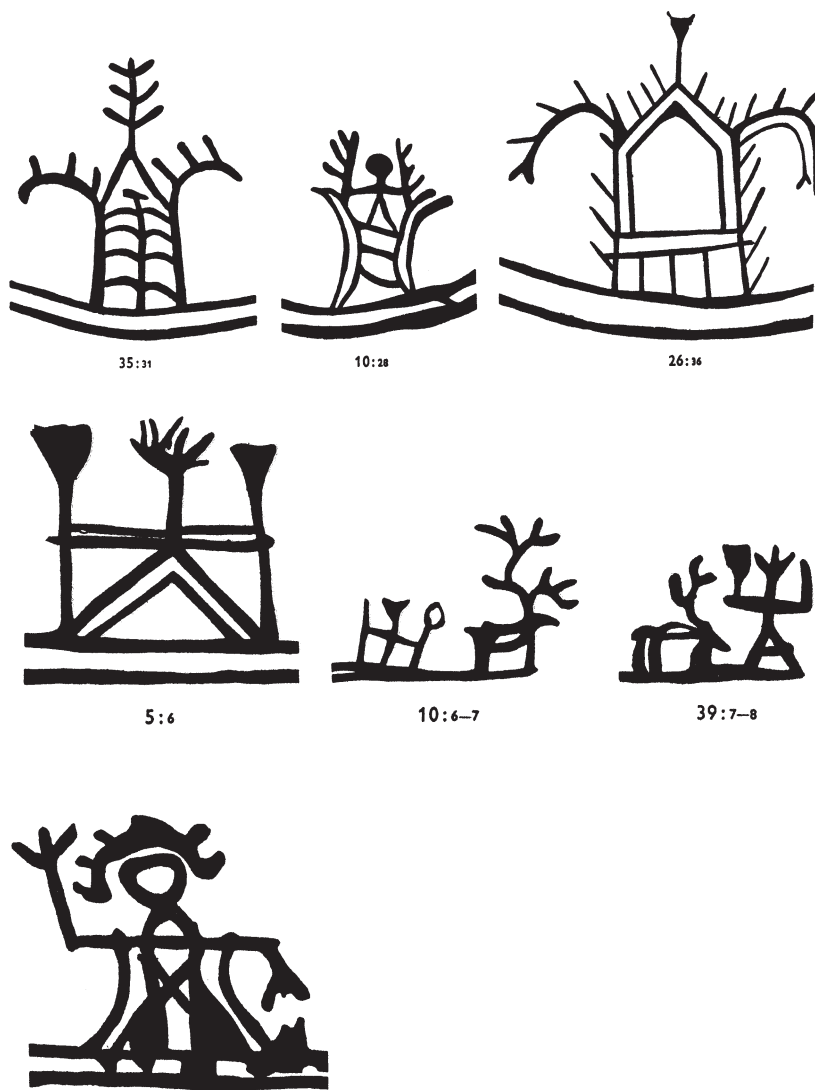


Fig. 66. Top row: Drum symbols for Raedie, corresponding to Vearelden ålmaj. Bottom: different representations of Biegekålmaj ("the Wind man"), most often equipped with two shovels as tools. (from Manker 1959.)

trust in with the greatest confidence. Skanke writes that she “is the first and the last, the Beloved and the most dependable, that in all their ways they turn to.”⁸³ At the same time, she can be regarded as the longest living of the Sámi goddesses—at the introduction of Christianity she was in part associated with Virgin Mary.⁸⁴ Uksáhká, the door god, protected small children and helped women during menstruation.

Finally, there was also a lower sphere, which was associated with the worlds of the dead (see text box: Jábmiid-aibmu, Ruohtta-áibmu and Saajvøe: the Worlds of the Dead). First, the manuscript sources refer to Jápmiid-áibmu, which can be construed as the ‘ordinary’ realm of the dead, where the souls went with the intention of being equipped with a new body. Second, there was a more unpleasant sphere, called Ruohtta-áibmu, where the death demon Ruohtta reigned. According to one tradition, it was here that those people who had failed to follow the gods’ will while they were alive ended up.

In addition, there was a happy sphere, which is depicted in light and positive tones, and where a few of the deceased lived on in a similar way as on earth, but with large, well-fed reindeer herds and ample access to resources like game and fish. In South Sámi, this sphere was called Saajveaajmøe, and it was often located at characteristic mountains that were considered sacred. These mountains were also regarded as residence for some of the helping guardian spirits. Further north, such mountains might be named with the adjective *bassi* ‘holy’, thus *Bassevárri*. It is not entirely clear how the Saajve sphere was related to the other realms of the dead, but there seem to have been contact points.

6.2.3 *The Shaman—the Noaidi*

Pre-Christian Sámi religion is often referred to as a shamanistic form of religion, and it was part of a more extensive, circumpolar tradition that shared certain central ideas about how the universe was organized. The concept ‘shaman’ itself is derived from a Siberian people, the Evenks, and is used in the study of religions as a central term to describe fundamental functions in these religions. Etymologically, the word *šaman* is assumed to refer to obsession and an agitated, exalted state of mind.⁸⁵ Since the universe was regarded as divided into several different spheres, one of

⁸³ Nordnorske samlinger, vol. V, 1943, 189.

⁸⁴ Friis 1871, 37; Dunfeld 2001, 241.

⁸⁵ Eliade 1998, 30; Solli 2002, 135.

the most important tasks of the shaman was to act as an intermediary by communicating with the spheres that ordinary people did not usually frequent. The shaman (in North Sámi the *noaidi*⁸⁶) functioned for people as their contact and connecting link to the supernatural and 'the other side.' The *noaidi*'s most important function was to take care of the community's relationships to the many gods or deities. He was also supposed to be able to serve as a prophet, not only to foretell what would happen, but primarily to reestablish balance and understanding if things had gone wrong. He was, thus, the connecting link between the three spheres, the one who could establish order if existence had been disturbed on some level. At the same time, he was the leader of central sacrificial ceremonies and fulfilled a sort of priest's role. In addition, he had a number of other tasks: he was skilled in medicine and a healer, and a wise man or spiritual guide by virtue of the traditional knowledge he possessed. Finally, he was also the group's storyteller or bard who expounded the coherences of the world. In Sámi culture, the shaman was most often a man (as opposed to both Norse culture and several Siberian cultures), but there is also information about female *noaidis*, especially from the East Sámi area.⁸⁷

In a trance or altered state of consciousness, the shaman could undertake journeys to the upper and lower worlds and also transport himself or herself geographically in the earthly world. Among humans, only the *noaidi* could undertake such journeys of their own free will. Others could visit or be visited from the other side in their dreams through an involuntary trance, and through death. Yet, only the shaman could do this following a request or on his/her own resolution. They could consult with gods or ancestors, bring back a soul from the realm of the dead for an apparently dead or temporarily sick body, but also capture and lead a soul there if it did not go there after death. On visits to the other spheres or through contact with the powers, they could track down lost reindeer, see what was best for the reindeer herds, and acquire knowledge of events far away or peer into the future. Because of their extensive abilities, shamans were the ones with the keys to solve the community's crises and conflicts, illness, famine, and ill fortune.

⁸⁶ South Sámi, *nåejttie*, Lule Sámi, *noajdde*, Kildin Sámi, *noojjd*, *nuojjd*.

⁸⁷ Sergejeva 1997.

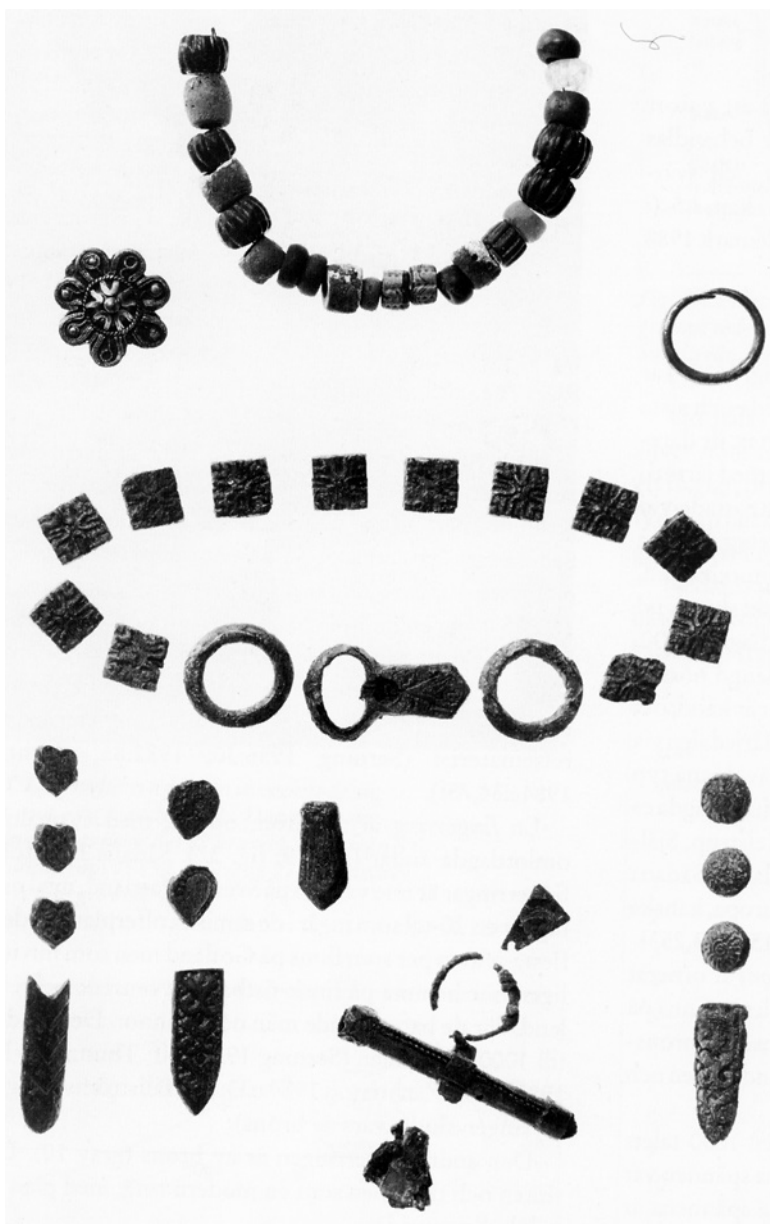


Fig. 67. Objects found in a richly equipped grave at Vivalen, Härjedalen. The deceased was buried with objects that were typical for both men's and women's clothing and duties. The gender-transgressive nature of the finds, together with the special "oriental" belt, has raised the question whether the buried person was a shaman. (Photo: Gunnel Jansson.)

THE SOUL JOURNEYS OF THE *NOAIDIS*

As an illustration of how the soul journeys of the Sámi shamans could appear and be interpreted, we present here excerpts of two depictions by outside observers, written down 500 years apart.

The first one stems from the Latin chronicle, *Historia Norvegiae*, written shortly after the middle of the twelfth century. The author was likely a Norwegian cleric who had relatively good knowledge about the conditions in the northern parts of the country and the Sámi settlement areas. Along with his fascination for the actual events, the author's purpose in writing the text may have been to underscore the need for Christian missionary activity among the Sámi:

One time, when some Christians who were trading with the Finns sat down to a meal with them, a woman where they were living suddenly fell down dead. The Christians began to grieve and wail, but the Finns took it less seriously. She was not dead, they said, but was struck by *gand* (sorcery) by someone who wanted to harm her, and could easily be brought back to life again. Then a sorcerer spread out a cloth, under which he made himself ready to sing his heathen incantations. Then he lifted a little vessel into the air. It was shaped like a sieve and was filled with various small figures: whales, reindeer with harnesses and skis and even a little boat with oars—all together tools which that devilish sorcerer would use for transport, over snowy open country, across wooded hillsides, and over deep seas. After he had chanted magic charms and danced with this equipment, he fell over, black as an Ethiopian over his entire body, while there was froth at his mouth so that one might think he had lost his wits. All of a sudden, he started to bellow just as his stomach split and he gave up the spirit. Then they asked another one, who was familiar with such magic, what had happened to these two. This other one then started his tricks in the same way, but with a rather different outcome; for this time, the woman stood up again, hale and hearty, while the dead sorcerer remained dead, and the other one explained that it had happened in this way: the *gand* of the sorcerer had been transformed into a whale, and when at terrible speed it went through a lake, purely by accident, it ran into the enemy *gand* that had been transformed into a sharp pole. These poles were hidden at the bottom of the lake, and then they cut through the stomach of the *gand* that had been driven out—that was evident after what one saw of the dead sorcerer in the house.^a

The other text was penned by the German-Swedish theologian, Johan Ferdinand Körningh, who, from the summer of 1659 to February of 1660, undertook an exploratory journey in Swedish lappland. He had studied at the Jesuit college in Prague (established in 1585), converted to Catholicism, and was ordained as a priest by the Pope. The aim of the trip was to chart the possibilities for a Catholic mission among the Sámi, a plan Körningh had described to key figures at the papal court and to Cristina, the former Queen of Sweden who had abdicated, converted, and was living in Rome. Körningh carried out the trip without revealing his real intentions, and was received by the then lappmark pastor and clergyman in Tornio town, Johannes Tornaëus. It is presumed that most of the actual knowledge about the Sámi that Körningh included in his report stems from Tornaëus.

^a Salvesen, A. 1969. English translation from the Norwegian.

A big fire is built and the Lapp takes all of his clothes off even during the most severe winter. Then he begins to shout aloud, approximately like the Jews in a synagogue. He touches the fire without getting burned, shouts and writhes, hits himself uninterruptedly like a mad man, does not hear what others say, and is completely engaged in his activities. If he is disturbed, it is said that misfortune will immediately befall him. He continues rampaging, until he falls to the ground like a dead person entirely numb. Even if he was put into the fire, he was not supposed to move. Then he lies a couple of hours. When he falls, those standing around spread a cover over him. Now another person places himself over him and begins to sing, while he enumerates various animals, sometimes a fish, sometimes a bird, sometimes a buck, etc. He continues the enumeration until, as they say, he runs into that mode, in which the wizard's soul in the meantime travels to remote districts; for at the same moment the unconscious Lapp comes to. If, for example, his soul traveled over the ocean, he comes to just when the name fish is mentioned, if he traveled on land, he recovers his soul at the word buck, if he traveled through the air, at the word bird, etc. But if the singer does not succeed in any way to hit the right word that stands for the soul's route, then the sleeping Lapp will certainly die, they say. Yet, it probably does not happen very often.^b

In order to undertake journeys, the free soul had to be uncoupled from the body, which happened during trances. The idea of a free soul that can operate independently from the body on soul journeys is, for that matter, a central element in northern Eurasian shamanism, of which the Sámi religion is a part. It was the free soul that traveled around, but this could only be accomplished with the help of so-called assistant spirits or helpers, who were like traveling companions, advisors, and protectors on the journey. These we must distinguish from the ordinary guardian spirits that everyone had; the helpers were part of the shaman's special equipment. These helper beings had the form of animal figures and the shaman's soul journeys took place accordingly attired in an animal body.

The helpers were respectively a bird, a reindeer bull, and a fish. In South Sámi, these beings were designated with the prefix *saaǰve-*, in Lule Sámi with *basseváre-* and in North Sámi with *noaide-*. In South Sámi, one thus spoke about *saaǰve-ledtie*, *saaǰve-sarva*, and *saaǰve-guelie*, while the corresponding designations in North Sámi were *noaide-loddi*, *noaide-sarvvis*, and *noaide-guolli*.⁸⁸ The animals were connected separately to the three spheres we have described: the bird was used for journeys to the upper world, the fish (or a serpent) on journeys to the realm of the dead, while the reindeer bull was used in this world. Metaphorically, we thus have the

^b Körningh, 1956, 45.

⁸⁸ Bäckman 1975, 116; see also Rydving 1995, 67.

pairs: bird—air, upper world; fish—lower world; reindeer—this world. According to Louise Bäckman, the reindeer bull was mainly a fighting animal that the *noaidi* used when his authority was challenged by competing *noaidis*. The reindeer bull was then sent out to represent him and fight for him: if the reindeer was injured or killed, the same thing happened to the *noaidi*.

6.3 CONCLUSION

With the breakthrough of Christianity, the previous understanding of reality was replaced by the Christian worldview. The old religious ideas were taboo and therefore, in part forgotten, but in part they also ‘went underground’ and survived as detached elements in popular belief. Sacrificial rites, which were supposed to contribute to maintaining the relationship between humans and the divine and spirit worlds, were abolished. Yet, individual features could survive, removed from their earlier connection and adapted to the way of living in a later time.⁸⁹ Many sacrificial sites and holy places in nature were respected for a long time. Material finds, such as coins from later time periods found at old *sieidis*, attest to the fact that many Sámi still saw the need to keep up good relations with supernatural forces.

Another area in which pre-Christian ideas could still be expressed was in the symbolic language of Sámi ornamentation, as can be seen in decorations on wood, antler, and bone objects and in pewter embroidery on Sámi clothing. The symbolic language of South Sámi ornamentation has been interpreted as encompassing expressions of both fundamental, existential relations, for example, the relationship between ‘the everyday’ and ‘the sacred,’ and of more specific ideas connected to natural forces, fertility, and the cosmic, life-giving force that the sun represented.⁹⁰

At the same time, some of those functions that had previously been taken care of by the *noaidi* continued to be carried out, but were then separated from the whole they had originally been part of and performed by people of special abilities within a certain area, for example, in the case of healing (*guvllárat*).

One of the greatest upheavals was provoked by the demand of the mission and the church that all burials had to occur in specially consecrated

⁸⁹ Kalstad 1997.

⁹⁰ Dunfjeld 2001.

ground, in cemeteries. This cast an entirely new light on the relationship between the living and the dead and entailed not only practical but also deep ethical problems.⁹¹ In those areas where burial customs have been studied more closely, it is clear that the Sámi grave customs in mountains and scree end at the time when the mission had succeeded in imposing its views (for example, the scree grave field at Mortensnes in Varanger). During reindeer nomadism, however, the practice of partial, temporary summer burials along the migration routes in the mountains continued, which perhaps can be understood as a carrying on of the old traditions with a new set of assumptions.

SÁMI—SCANDINAVIAN—FINNO-UGRIC:
A COMMON RELIGIOUS CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATION?

There were several common features between the pre-Christian cosmology of the Sámi and the corresponding conceptions of neighboring peoples, both the Old Norse religion and the worldview of several of the Finno-Ugric people of the Baltic region. A basic common feature is polytheism, which allowed for a broadly complex gallery of gods and deities that intervened in earthly existence. This feature, which also occurred in Greek and Roman mythology, stands in sharp contrast to several of the later dominant world religions such as Christianity that are monotheistic and based on the idea of an omnipotent god. For some of the deities, there are also clear parallels both in their names and in regard to their characteristics (e.g., Vearelden álmaj corresponded to the Norse god Frøy, also called Veraldargoð, and Horagalles corresponded to old man Thor). As far as mythology is concerned, a number of parallels can be established between the Sámi and the early Finnish pantheon.^c The common features, however, go deeper than these identifications between personified divine powers, and concern, above all, basic features of shamanism and the cosmological conceptions about the ordering of the universe. In the first chapters of *Ynglingasaga*, Odin is presented with clearly shamanistic features:

Odin could shift his appearance. When he did so, his body would lie there as if he were asleep or dead; but he himself, in an instant, in the shape of a bird or animal, a fish or a serpent, went to distant countries in his or other men's errands . . . Odin had the skill which gives great power and which he practiced himself. It is called *seith* (sorcery), and by means of it he could know the fate of men and predict events that had not yet come to pass; and by it he could also inflict death or misfortunes or sickness, or also deprive people of their wits or strength, and give them to others . . .^d

⁹¹ Kalstad 1997.

^c Friis 1871.

^d "Saga of the Ynglings," Snorri Sturluson, *Heimskringla*, 1992, 10–11.

Several scholars today, therefore, think that the Norse religion was truly shamanistic in character or, in any case, had shamanistic features.^e The division into three spheres is also found in Norse religion, where the world tree Yggdrasil was the connecting link. Farthest down was the underworld, where the *norms* spin and a serpent breathes life into the tree's roots. In the middle of the trunk live the humans and the reindeer, and on top Odin rules in the form of an eagle. Odin's two ravens, Hugin and Munin, can also be associated with shamanistic traditions. Similarly, one finds in Finnish mythology a stratification of the world of the gods with figures who stayed in the various spheres.

There are also several parallels between Norse myths, Sámi conceptions, and the motive and intrigue circle that is the theme of the Finnish Kalevala tradition; above all, the connection to the myth-entangled contrivance *Sampo*, which can also be understood as the world pole.^f

Scholars' understanding of these common features and connections has changed over time. In his fundamental presentation of *Lappisk mytologi* from 1871, the theologian and lappologist Jens Andreas Friis emphasized a number of parallels between the Sámi and the pre-Christian Finnish world of the gods, and at the same time drew comparisons with Inuit and Eurasian forms of shamanism. Other researchers, though, have been more influenced by an evolutionary-diffusionary cultural view, and assumed that the Sámi in older times were at a lower stage of development than their Norse-speaking neighbors. The Dane Axel Olrik and the Norwegian Johan Fritzner, therefore, assumed that the Sámi had borrowed the most essential of their more precise religious ideas from Norse culture.^g Later generations of scholars who have worked with Sámi religious expressions have rightly reacted to the devaluation of Sámi culture that this implied, and instead underscored what was independent and original in the formulation of Sámi religion or stressed the points of contact with eastern, Eurasian traditions. Possible connections to contemporary Norse conceptions have, therefore, been toned down or directly denied. At the same time, though, it must also be said that researchers with a more comprehensive regional perspective on Scandinavian forms of religion have taken a more lenient, intermediate standpoint and stressed the lines of connection in both directions. There is, therefore, a contemporary debate as to whether the broad concurrence that can be demonstrated between Sámi, Finnish, and early Norse conceptions does not lead one to the conclusion that in Fennoscandia there existed an archaic, common religious understanding that included shamanism, polytheism, magic, and sacrifices, and that came into existence through the exchange of traditions between the religious groups. Before getting tangled up in the question of cultural borrowing, there thus seems to be reason to emphasize the possibility of a prehistoric, common Nordic basis that was manifested in varying ways within the separate religions.^h

^e Steinsland and Meulengracht Sørensen 1994; Hedeager 1997; Solli 2002.

^f Drobin and Keinänen 2001.

^g Olrik 1905; Fritzner 1877.

^h Drobin and Keinänen 2001.

EPILOGUE

In this book, we have outlined some of the main trajectories and events in Sámi history until the middle of the eighteenth century, spanning more than two thousand years. This study takes us back to the last millennium before our era, a period when a number of social and economic conditions contributed to a crucial differentiation of the northern communities. While the coastal communities adopted a farming economy and oriented themselves socially and culturally toward southern Scandinavian communities to an increasing degree, the societies of the interior and those on the northernmost coast continued their hunting-based economy and engaged in closer contacts with metal-producing communities to the southeast. This dawning economic and social dualism would turn out to be decisive for the formation of the cultural and ethnic identities that are discernible in the archaeological and written material from the Iron Age onwards; in other words, for the formation of 'Germanic'/Norse and Sámi identity in the northern Fennoscandia.

Throughout the Iron Age and the first part of the Middle Ages, ethnic ascription and interaction between these groups was largely built on their socio-material affinities and economic specializations. Moreover, much suggests that there was a high degree of reciprocity, cooperation, and social acceptance between the Sámi and neighboring peoples. Moreover, the sharing of basic religious conceptions among them may have further facilitated this interaction during the pre-Christian era. This does not imply, however, that the interaction was symmetrical and uniform throughout the entire period. Social and economic changes occurred and interactional networks were altered.

In line with this, a certain regional variation also seems to have occurred with regard to the formation and articulation of Sámi cultural identity within the Sámi settlement area. Regional traditions, different natures, and different 'others' to relate to, resulted in different cultural manifestations. Nonetheless, the Sámi's mobile, foraging mode of production functioned as a significant unifying factor among the hunting communities and contrasted them with surrounding sedentary, farming societies. Language also worked in this way and must have played an important role in distinguishing the Sámi hunters from other, primarily Germanic, peoples. It is interesting to note that the Sámi language seems to have

ancient roots in all Sámi settlement areas, extending back to the last millennium BC.

In our opinion, Sámi ethnic identity became strongly linked to a common hunting mode of lifestyle and an associated cultural repertoire. This repertoire gradually developed in the first centuries of our era and was partly shaped and consolidated through interaction both with Finnish and northern Germanic groups. A further cultural consolidation—and far more distinct ethnic articulation—took place during the Viking Age and the Early Middle Ages. Several cultural features that earlier had had only local or confined regional distributions seem to have been combined and widely adopted among the Sámi in this period. The outcome of this process of syncretization, which also included foreign elements, was a distinct cultural complex that can be identified as ‘Sámi’ from at least the late Viking Age.

Throughout the Iron Age and the Early Middle Ages, there were relatively clear and stable borders between the settlement areas of the Sámi and of the neighboring peoples—a territorial balance that can be viewed both as a condition for and a reflection of the reciprocity and the cooperation that characterized the relationship between ethnic groups. In the following period, ca. 1200–1550, however, this territorial balance was disrupted and the relations between the Sámi and other ethnic groups changed dramatically. A political expression of this change is that the emerging state powers in the west and east, through internal agreements, divided the Sámi areas into partly overlapping spheres of interest, in which they claimed their right to collect tribute. The Sámi areas now also became the object of more direct colonization, exemplified by the emerging fishing settlements along the Finnmark coast and the establishment of an agricultural population in the river valleys of the Gulf of Bothnia.

The Sámi's contact with the different trade networks in the west, south, and east gave rise to further specialization and distinct forms of production. A number of different subsistence forms occurred, from mass trapping of wild reindeer to more maritime resource utilization in combination with domestic animal husbandry. In this period, reindeer pastoralism was established as the dominant mode of production within parts of the Sámi area, though small-scale herding may have occurred earlier. The origin(s) of reindeer herding were probably due to the complex interplay between external and internal conditions, which also varied regionally and chronologically. In the Late Middle Ages, trade, colonization, and growing government administration were probably decisive in creating

'favorable' conditions for the development of local conflicts of interest and thus stimulating internal seeds of change.

The last period treated in this book, from ca. 1550–1750, is also characterized by processes of colonization and political integration. In contrast to the Middle Ages, however, state authorities stressed institutional development to a much greater degree in their strategies of government. This resulted in enduring intervention into the Sámi areas and more or less rendered impossible any basis for autonomous Sámi social systems. The indirect control that the states had earlier exercised over Sámi areas through taxation and trade was now replaced by direct control. Through the establishment of new bodies and institutions in Sámi territory, the Sámi were subjected to secular and religious jurisdiction from the outside. The demand for sovereign 'rights of hegemony' to Sámi areas was one of the causes of several wars between the northern states in the seventeenth and beginning of the eighteenth centuries. For most of the Sámi areas, these conflicts had their final political solution with the peace agreement and the delineation of borders after the Great Northern War. With the exception of some of the East Sámi *siidas*, the Sámi settlement areas were now definitively divided and unambiguously subjugated by the respective Russian and Nordic states.

This policy of direct control, in turn, opened the way for fundamental changes in the legal and the religious spheres. The question of rights to resources hereafter increasingly became an issue of how Sámi resource utilization complied with the states' prevailing legal systems rather than something being regulated by internal Sámi institutions and customs. In the first decades of the eighteenth century, a decisive missionary campaign against the Sámi religion was implemented. Christianization brought a number of changes to daily life and Sámi conception of the world and also created new premises for how Sámi identity would be articulated.

For the Sámi, these various new conditions did not have only negative consequences. While outside encroachment undoubtedly weakened old social and cultural institutions and imposed strong restrictions on central elements of Sámi cultural and legal practice, they also made possible new and more versatile economic strategies. The new situation brought a whole series of new people, things, and cultural impulses to the Sámi areas. The Sámi thus gained access to new and exotic products, including new tastes and means of pleasure. The countless Dutch and English clay pipes found at Sámi settlement sites attest to the cultural acceptance of the foreign and to the larger networks in which Sámi culture was now involved.

The middle of the eighteenth century stands out, nonetheless, as a fundamental turning point in Sámi history, which makes it natural to end this book there. At this point in time, a number of the earlier tendencies culminated and they assumed more permanent institutional forms, which again provided trajectories for further developments. From the last half of the eighteenth century, the Sámi had to cope with the fact that their land had been intersected by definitive, territorial national borders, that their customary rights and usage of resources were largely defined and evaluated on the basis of the states' legal systems, and that their religious beliefs and practices, at least officially, had to comply with the states' Christian religions. Through the infrastructure that had now been established, the states could, with increasing effectiveness, implement their numerous political ambitions in the Sámi areas.

CHRONOLOGY

Dates	<i>Northern Chronology</i>	<i>Nordic/North European chronology</i>	<i>Corresponding chron. terms</i>
1800 BC 500– BC/AD 370– AD 570	Younger Stone Age	Neolithic	
	Early Metal Age	Bronze Age	
		Pre-Roman Iron Age	
	Early Iron Age	Roman Iron Age	
		Migration Period	Germanic Iron Age (DK)
AD 800 1000 AD 1050	Late Iron Age	Merovingian Period	Vendel period (SE)
		Viking Age	Carolingian Period (DE)
AD 1150 AD 1350 AD 1550	Middle Ages	Early Middle Ages	
		High Middle Ages	
		Late Middle Ages	

TABLE OF RELATIONS

<i>Migration/Merovingian Period</i> <i>AD 400–800</i>	Different Sami groups have institutionalised barter and exchange relations with various neighbouring peoples: 1) with North Germanic/Norse chieftainships in the west, to whom they also pay tribute; 2) with Kvens along the northern coasts of the Bothnian Gulf and 3) with populations in present-day Finland, like the Hämeläiset and the Suomalaiset.
<i>1st half of the 11th century</i> <i>(AD 1015–ca. 1050)</i>	The first kings of the recently unified Norwegian monarchy defeat the last representatives of the North Norwegian aristocracy and make fur trade with the Sami and the collection of tribute from them, a royal prerogative.
<i>The 11th and 12th centuries</i>	The city republic Novgorod expands in present-day north-Western Russia and establishes a comprehensive trade network among Finno-Ugric speaking hunter-gatherers. Tax collectors from Novgorod may have reached the southern fringe of Kola peninsula in the first part of the 13th century. Tax collectors and merchants of Karelian descent take on an important role within Novgorod's network.
<i>End of 12th century</i>	The Norwegian realm stretches as far north as the Malangen fiord.
<i>13th century</i>	Tax collectors from Novgorod may have reached the southern fringe of Kola peninsula in the first part of the 13th century.
<i>Early 14th century</i>	Mutual peace agreements concluded separately between Sweden and Russia (1323) and between Norway and Russia (1326). Thereby, huge territories with mutually overlapping rights to taxation of the Sami population are established and delineated. In the north a common Norwegian-Russian area of taxation, between the Lyngen fiord and the easternmost point of the Kola peninsula, and stretching further south- and westwards along the northern shores of the White Sea.

Table (*cont.*)

1328	The king of the Swedish-Norwegian union monarchy grants extensive trading privileges to the <i>birkarls</i> , a group of traders settled in the landscapes around the northernmost part of the Gulf of Bothnia. This measure may be seen as support for Swedish interests within the common tax area just established.
1330s	Partially financed with means from the Crusader Tithe, collected by the Western Church, the Norwegian monarchy builds <i>Vardøhus castle</i> , situated at the entrance of the Varanger fiord, in order to defend the interests of the Norwegian realm against Novgorod.
Later part of the 14th century	The common monarch of all three unified Nordic states (Denmark, Norway, Sweden) expresses concern for the Christianization of the Sami, and urges for conversion and baptism.
Second half of 14th and first half of 15th century	Several armed conflicts and reciprocal marauding expeditions between Russian and Karelians on the one side, and Norwegians on the other. Both parties besiege and destroy settlements and institutions (i.a. churches) on each other's territory, along the White Sea shores as well as in Northern Norway.
Early 15th century	First missionary among the Sami—from the Swedish side—mentioned 1419.
Later 15th century	The <i>birkarls</i> have extended their trading expeditions to the Sami living along the Norwegian coast in the west.
16th century	1551: The private contribution which <i>the birkarls</i> from Swedish side receive from the Sami, is subjugated under the Swedish Crown, and is henceforth collected as a governmental tax. 1551–1618: Comprehensive 'bailiff's accounts' preserved on Swedish side, give detailed records over tax collected from the Sami, both in the inland regions and along the coasts.—More sporadic evidence of parallel Norwegian and Russian taxation.

Table (*cont.*)

	1595: A military conflict between Sweden and Russia is concluded with the <i>peace in Teusina</i> , whereby Russia is excluded from all rights to trade and taxation west of Varanger. This marks the start of a step-by-step division of the joint, overlapping taxation districts in the north.
17th century	Early years of 17th century: The Danish-Norwegian king Christian IV confirms special privileges for the settled Sami along the Norwegian coast: They shall be allowed to use their traditional localities and resources without having to pay <i>entrance fees</i> or <i>annual rent</i>, as ordinary tenants would have to do. By a comparison with the old Norwegian allodial system, this arrangement is therefore called 'Sami allodium' (<i>finneodel</i>). 1611–1613: The 'Kalmar War' between Sweden and the unified monarchy Denmark-Norway, fought over issues about control over territories, people and sea waters in the north. According to the ensuing <i>peace of Knæred</i>, Denmark-Norway shall have complete supremacy over the sea routes north of Norway, and the territories of the coastal Sami along the Western and Northern coasts shall unilaterally be subject to Danish-Norwegian authority, regarding both taxation, administration and jurisdiction.
Beginning and the middle of the 17th century	The institution ' <i>tax land</i> ' is consolidated in the administrative districts of "lappmarker" in the Sámi areas of Sweden. 'Tax land' was a separate part of the joint community territory among the Sámi, pertaining to a separate family who paid a specified tax for it, and thereby secured an inheritable usufructual right.—From medieval times, the parallel notion ' <i>tax farm</i> ' was the term for peasant freehold farms within the Swedish system of landed property, and therefore the rights of the Sami to their particular 'tax lands' have been juxtaposed to the rights of the Swedish freeholders to their farms, since general tax to the Crown was only paid by freeholders, and not by tenants.

Table (*cont.*)

1661	The special allodial privileges for settled Sámi along the coast of Norway (the so called <i>finneodel</i>) were abolished in the southern part of Troms county.
1666	Due to heavy military expenditures resulting from successive wars with Sweden, the Danish-Norwegian monarchy sells most of its property in Northern Norway to private magnates. The items sold do not only include the <i>property rights</i> to a vast multitude of Crown tenant farms in the region, but also a long series of other Royal incomes, like various <i>ground revenues</i> , parts of the <i>tithe</i> (confiscated from the Church during the Reformation), and <i>taxes</i> from both Norwegians and Sámi—in particular the so called ‘ <i>Lap tax</i> ’ collected from the Sámi reindeer nomads.—‘ <i>Common land areas</i> ’ in the forest valleys and mountainous regions of the interior were also sold, with the ensuing result that some of the private magnates who purchased these areas, started a practice of renting out pastures to the nomads.
1759	The special allodial privileges for settled Sámi along the coast of Norway (the so called <i>finneodel</i>) were abolished in Nordland county and the northern part of Troms county.

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